

PTOLEMY THE SON: A PRETENDED CO-REGENCY?

for Leon Mooren

Abstract: Ptolemy the Son has been much studied in the past. The problem of his identity has been considered as the most important aspect to investigate. This is true, but this article tries to focus more on another aspect which has been neglected: if there was a true co-regency between Ptolemy II and the Son or what kind of co-regency it was, in comparison with other cases from the times of the Diadochs and Epigones. This is possible through a new examination of the main evidence (for example *I. Milet* 139) and the updating of the chronology, thanks to *P. Sorb.* III 71.

In his *Ptolemaic Dynasty*, published online between 2001 and 2011, the late Chris Bennett wrote a short description of a member of the Lagid royal family, usually called Ptolemy ‘the Son’ and taken to be the son of Ptolemy II. This Son is mentioned for a period of about 10 years (267-259 BC) in the formal titulatures on Greek and demotic papyri; a son of Ptolemy II is also recorded in some literary sources and inscriptions referring to a period in which the future Ptolemy III would still have been too young to act as joint ruler. Ptolemy the Son, however, is always defined by scholars as co-regent or co-ruler of Ptolemy II. Nevertheless, Bennett added the comment: “Fortunately, no one has yet tried to assign him an ordinal number amongst the Ptolemies”¹.

The actual identity of this co-regent, and the historical interpretation of his co-regency has apparently so puzzled scholars that nobody has dared to renumber the kings, not even Werner Huss, who wrote the most complete article on the subject in 1998 (with a complement in 2004)², and who did not hesitate to renumber the Ptolemies in his masterpiece on the dynasty in 2001. The identity of Ptolemy the Son still remains the “most controversial question in Ptolemaic genealogy of the Lagid family”³, though recently this record has been seriously challenged by Ptolemy Neos Philopator in the second century. But that is another story. And it is not my intention to change the traditional list.

* The text is based on the paper presented at the colloquium, now published, Cinzia BEARZOT & Franca LANDUCCI (eds.), *Alexander’s Legacy*. Atti del Convegno, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano 2015, Roma 2016. This article was written using also papyri.info (<http://www.papyri.info>), Trismegistos (<http://www.trismegistos.org>), Epigraphical database (<http://epigraphy.packhum.org>).

¹ Cf. Bennett (2011).

² Huss (1998); Huss (2004); see also Huss (2001) 273-274 and 280-281.

³ Cf. Bennett (2011).

Nor do I intend to discuss again in detail all the different theses or speculations about fathers and sons, be they natural, legitimate or bastard, in order to state who exactly Ptolemy the Son may have been: I agree with Huss and Bennett who consider this Ptolemy as the elder son of Arsinoe II and identify him with the dynast of Telmessos⁴. By the way, I do not think that such re-discussion will help much in understanding what for me is the most interesting problem: i.e., what could have been the aim of Philadelphus when he first decided to associate a son with himself on the throne and then, at a later date, to omit him from the official protocols, and what kind of status Ptolemy the Son had. Therefore I prefer now to resume very briefly the *status quaestionis* on the chronology and identity of the individual involved, and then to draw attention only to some of the issues concerning the so-called co-regency.

PRELIMINARY PROBLEM: CHRONOLOGY

According to two papyri published in the latest edition of *P. Sorb.* III, in 2011, we know that Ptolemy the Son is already mentioned in the pre-scripts of Egyptian documents in 268/67 BC (*P. Sorb.* III 71)⁵; he was, however, certainly not present in 270⁶. Moreover, it has been undoubtedly confirmed that the official Alexandrian eponymous cult for Arsinoe Philadelphos, with her *kanephoros*, was established the year after the death of the queen in 269/68⁷. The first priestess had to be Eukleia, daughter of Aristodikos, as recorded in the demotic *P. Eheverträge* 1⁸. Unfortunately, the first lines of this contract are missing and it is not possible to know if Ptolemy the Son was already mentioned as well. On the other hand, the new date given for the Chremonides decree, 269/68 BC⁹, now seems to

⁴ Cf. Huss (1998) 247, and Bennett (2011), with note 4.

⁵ *P. Sorb.* III 71, ll. 13-16 (27.12.268 – 26.1.267 BC): [Βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ Πτολεμαίου ἔτου[ς ὀκτώκαι-] | [δεκάτου, ἐφ'] ἱερέως Λύκου τοῦ Κλησία Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ θεῶν Ἀδελ[φῶν, κανη[φόρου Ἀρσι-] | [νόης Φιλαδέλφου Βερενίκης τῆς Ἀνδρομάχου, μηνὸς Αὔδου, ἐν κόμῃ Τακόναι τοῦ] | [Ὀξυρυγίτου].

⁶ *P. Sorb.* III 70, ll. 1-6 (3.8.270 BC): Βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου τοῦ | Πτολεμαίου (ἔτους) ις, ἐφ' ἱερέως | [Ἀρχαγ(?)]άθου τοῦ Ἀγαθοκλέους | [Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ θεῶν Ἀδελ- | [φῶν, μηνὸς Λαίου ι, ἐν Ὀξυρύγ- | χων πόλει.

⁷ In fact, this is the only year now left which could host the name of Eukleia, the only *canephoros* whose name is attested but without the year of priesthood.

⁸ See H. Cadell in the commentary of *P. Sorb.* III, p. 12.

⁹ Cf. the date now given for the archon Peithidemos by Osborne (2012) 89 and n. 27, who assumes that Arsinoe was still alive, though she certainly was not, but probably since

provide a synchronism between the alliance of Athens, Sparta and Ptolemy and the institution of the new eponymous priesthood. Therefore I venture to suggest that Ptolemy II may have decided in the very same year to also add the Son in the official prescripts. This mention lasted until mid-27th Macedonian regnal year, 259 BC: in September, still Egyptian year 26, the Son is mentioned in a demotic papyrus (*P. Hawara* 0I, 6), but in November, in Thoth, at the beginning of the Egyptian year 27, Ptolemy II was already alone again (*BGU* VI 1227)¹⁰.

Both the introduction and the exclusion of Ptolemy the Son in the official titulature must depend on two possible connected factors: the need to emphasize, or cancel, the official role of that particular prince, and the need to use, or no longer use, him for political reasons.

So, despite the fact that, at least from the perspective here investigated, this is not the most important aspect of the problem, it becomes quite relevant to identify the prince, though, alas, there have been and indeed still remain many candidates for this. Again Bennett's website is quite useful: here it is possible to find at least seven different identifications or hypotheses of identification. I give here the list, with the main bibliographical references, as presented by Bennett, slightly corrected and updated (though it cannot be complete). Ptolemy the Son was:

- (a) elder son of Lysimachus and Arsinoe II, adopted by Ptolemy II;¹¹ or
- (b) son of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe I, future Ptolemy III;¹² or
- (c) son of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe I, elder, unknown brother of Ptolemy III;¹³
or
- (d) son of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, unknown;¹⁴ or
- (e) son of Ptolemy II and a concubine, unknown, younger than Ptolemy III;¹⁵
or

a short time; and see moreover the new edition of the decree in *IG* II³ 912. Knoepfler (2012), p. 452 still has some doubts, some of them based, nevertheless, on the wrong assumption that Arsinoe II could still have been alive in 269/68.

¹⁰ Quite interesting is the beginning of *P. Rev. Laws*, col. 1, l. 1, where the name of Ptolemaios the Son was cleared and the titulature of Ptolemy II changed into 'Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy Soter', while in col. 24, l. 2, the Son is still mentioned in the 27th year, but the month in both dates is now lost.

¹¹ Huss (1998), (2004); Bennett (2011); Müller (2009) 94-95, 327. Oddly she does not mention the problem of Ptolemy the Son in Müller (2011) 157-182; Caneva (2013) 287-288.

¹² Hölbl (2001) 42 (here Ptolemy the Son is considered a commander in Milet in the late 260s); Buraselis (2005) 91-102.

¹³ Ogden (1999) 74 and 79-80; Tunny (2000) 83-92.

¹⁴ Volkmann (1959) 1666-1667.

¹⁵ Hazzard (1987) 152, and again in (2000), part. 16, 40, 66.

- (f) illegitimate son of Ptolemy II, unknown, elder than Ptolemy III;¹⁶ or
 (g) possible illegitimate son of Ptolemy II, called son of Andromachus¹⁷.

I do not discuss here all the different issues, nor give a complete bibliography, which, by the way, will probably grow still more. On the other hand, it must be noticed that most scholars have examined the problem just stating what was most convincing to themselves, often without analysing in depth the implications of the choice they made, or the coherence with all the documents.

I just wish to underline some aspects in the evidence that can justify the option for the identification supported by Huss and Bennett.

AUTHORS

Literary sources are scanty and none actually states that Ptolemy II took a co-ruler. The usual texts that are quoted — Trogus' Prologue to Book 26¹⁸ and the Athenaeus passage concerning the death of Eirene, the mistress of Ptolemy the son¹⁹ — never actually mention a co-regency,

¹⁶ Domingo Gygax (2002) 49-56 accepted the identification with Ptolemy the Son proposed by Derchain (1985) 35-36 for the male figure represented in the Mendes stele and, as this figure in the stele is called "his son who carries the name of 'he, who has sired him'", excluded that he could be adopted by the king, and as Ptolemy III, in his opinion, would be too young, this figure had to be a bastard of the king. As we see below, both reasons cannot be valid now; Carney (2013) 124-126 is convinced that Ptolemy could not be Arsinoe II's son because his father Lysimachus had been defeated and because there is no evidence that Ptolemy II had adopted him. Both reasons seem to me evidently quite weak: Lysimachus' death was precisely the reason why his son could be considered a possible heir to the crown of Macedonia, and the evidence of a possible adoption is in the titulature itself, as for Ptolemy's son Euergetes 'adopted' by Arsinoe II.

¹⁷ Ravazzolo (1996) 123-143; Pizzonia (2002) 9-29.

¹⁸ *Prol. Trog. 26: Sexto et vicensimo volumine continentur haec. Quibus in urbibus Graeciae dominationem Antigonus Gonatas constituerit. Ut defectores Gallos Megaris delevit regemque Lacedaemonium Area Corinthi interfecit, dehinc cum fratris sui Crateri filio Alexandro bellum habuit. Ut princeps Achaiae Aratus Sicionem et Corinthum et Megara occupavit. Ut in Syria rex Antiochus cognomine Soter altero filio occiso, altero rege nuncupato Antiocho decesserit. Ut in Asia filius Ptolomaei regis socio Timarcho desciverit a patre. Ut frater Antigoni Demetrius occupato Cyrenis regno interiiit. Ut mortuo rege Antiocho filius eius Seleucus Callinicus regnum acceperit.* It is evident that the list is not chronologically ordered.

¹⁹ Athen. *Deipn.* 13.65: Πτολεμαῖός τε ὁ τὴν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ διέπων φρουρὰν υἱὸς ὢν τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου βασιλέως Εἰρήνην εἶχε τὴν ἑταίραν, ἥτις ὑπὸ Θρακῶν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐπιβουλευομένου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου καὶ καταφυγόντος εἰς τὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν

nor call this son *basileus*. To these passages we can add *P. Haun.* 6, a literary papyrus, or better a school text of II-III AD which has been considered a biographical *pinax* of the Ptolemaic dynasty²⁰. In Trogus it is only evident that a son of Ptolemy II must have been in Miletus when the tyrant Timarchus was in control, probably from the end of the 260s to the early 250s. Usually scholars tend to link this episode to the presence in Miletus of a son mentioned by Ptolemy II in a letter to the Ionian city, dated to 262 BC, and reconstruct this episode as the occasion when Timarchus, an Etolian mercenary, became tyrant: since the Son disappears from the Egyptian titulatures in 259, a rebellion is assumed to have taken place that year; and since the eponymous list of the *polis* of that period ends with Apollo, used for dating in 260/59²¹, it is further assumed that Timarchus took power from that year and held it until Antiochus II succeeded in freeing the city. This seems a strong coincidence. But why had the Son, probably whilst in Asia, decided to revolt against his father? And, as Huss already wondered²², did he revolt through personal ambition and did his father as a result remove him from the protocols, or did he revolt because his father had removed him?

In the passage of Athenaeus, the son of Ptolemy II is clearly some kind of commander, possibly a *strategos*, chief of a garrison in Ephesus, and he is definitely not called *basileus*. Moreover, it is not sure that these episodes describe the same person as the Prologue of Trogus: city and contest are quite different, not to say that the time is also probably quite different; furthermore, the individual in Ephesus has been unanimously connected to the Ptolemaios ‘surnamed son of Andromachos’, of *P. Haun.* 6, who could have been a bastard son of Philadelphos and his well-known mistress

συγκατέφυγεν· καὶ ἀποκτεινάντων αὐτὸν ἐκείνων ἡ Εἰρήνη ἐχομένη τῶν ρόπτρων τῶν θυρῶν τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπέρραινεν τοῦ αἵματος τοῖς βομοῖς, ἕως καὶ αὐτὴν κατέσφαξαν. Convincingly, scholars tend to consider this episode as taken from Phylarchus, cf. Schepens (2007) 251-252, who considers this passage as the first part of fr. 24 of the historian.

²⁰ See Gallo (1975) 57-75. Gallo’s conclusion is that the papyrus can be considered “un prodotto minore dell’erudizione alessandrina”, ‘alessandrina’ having also a chronological meaning, that is considering it a copy of a Hellenistic work. I would anyway underline the chronological coincidence with Athenaeus’ work. A lot of ancient Hellenistic works were available to Athenaeus, a scholar from Egypt and himself an author of a *Περὶ τῶν ἐν Συρίαι βασιλευσάντων*, but the problem is their use, barely historical, and the purposes of the papyrus which seems to be more a working copy of a very resuming compilation than a literary text.

²¹ Cf. *Milet* III 123 (= Syll³. 322), l. 59. It is unanimously accepted that Apollo’s eponymous priesthood is to be connected to troubles for the city.

²² Cf. Huss (1998) 238.

Bilistiche who would have married Andromachos²³. This Ptolemaios is also always identified with the Alexandrian eponymous priest of 251/50, Ptolemaios son of Andromachos²⁴. But this in itself is, in my view, further proof that Ptolemaios son of Andromachos could not be the same as the co-regent who once was recorded in the royal titulatures as ‘Ptolemaios, the son of the king’. For how in official titulatures could the same man ever be recorded as ‘son of Andromachos’?

However, in the case of both Trogus and Athenaeus, it appears that the co-regency of the Son, if this Ptolemy was the same person, was considered by neither author as sufficiently important to be noted.

The evidence of *P. Haun.* 6 is even more puzzling. The identification with the Ptolemaios of Athenaeus seems certain because of the Thracians and the city of Ephesos recorded: the fragment is a biographical summary concerning a Ptolemaios “called son of Andromachos” or perhaps “called Andromachos”²⁵, and is recorded together with other brief notices of lives of different members of the Lagid family; these data have been considered as a clue to an identification with the co-ruler of Ptolemy II. But even if, rightly or wrongly, the Ptolemaios of *P. Haun.* 6 is to be considered the same of Athenaeus’ episode, he does not bear the title of king, nor is he called “son” of the king.

Moreover, in the same text there existed at least one biography of a member of the royal family, Magas, Philopator’s brother, who never became king. Was Ptolemaios son of Andromachos a relative of the king? It is possible, but it is not necessary to conceive of a bastard²⁶.

²³ Cf., e.g., to cite just a few of the scholars who hold this view, Buraselis (2005) 96-98, the last of the contributions devoted by this scholar to the discussion; Walbank (1972) 588-589; and the articles by Ravazzolo (1996) and Pizzonia (2002); but against this reconstruction, recently, Ogden (2008) 376-378. There is no positive evidence of this: no evidence for a marriage of Bilistiche to Andromachos, no evidence of a Ptolemy’s son by Bilistiche, anyway.

²⁴ Clarysse & Van der Veken (1983) n. 24.

²⁵ Cf. *P. Haun.* 6, fr. 1, ll. 1-2: Πτολεμαῖος ἐπικλησιν Ἀνδρομάχου; and ll. 4-7: Πτολεμαῖ(ος) ἐπικλησιν Ἀνδρομάχου. In l. 1 the name *Ptolemaios* is filled, according to the inspection made by Bülow-Jacobsen (1979) 92, but the layout of the text does not consent a certain reconstruction of this double mention, the second one, read as a genitive, being inside a circle. In theory it could be possible, in this case, as the name is abbreviated, that it could be in the genitive, but it would be the only instance in the papyrus. A surname Andromachos has been connected to a victory in the battle of Andros, but not convincingly.

²⁶ As another pure speculation, he could be the son of Andromachos and Philotera, Ptolemy II’s sister, and so the brother of the canephora Berenike: simply it cannot be excluded.

INSCRIPTIONS

Similarly, there are very few mentions of Ptolemy the Son in Greek inscriptions and those that are preserved are sometimes also ambiguous.

A text from Xanthos in Lycia is the only one dated to February 259 BC, in the ‘Egyptian style’, though by the Macedonian calendar: this probably results from the annexation to the Ptolemaic kingdom, accomplished by Ptolemy II not many years earlier and it implies a strict respect of the Alexandrian protocols²⁷.

IG XII Suppl. 115 (Methymna) apparently provides clear evidence not only of the co-regency, but also of joint royal cult, the cult of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy the Son. This inscription preserves an honorary decree for Damos, who was priest of Ptolemy and his son²⁸. Its date in the reign of Philadelphus has been challenged in the past on paleographic grounds: Habicht and Bagnall have proposed and maintained a date at the end of the third century, between 209 and 205, in the reign of Philopator and his son, the future Epiphanes²⁹. This is possible in theory, as such an association of the future Ptolemy V is found in Egyptian documents³⁰, but, on the other hand, the absence of Arsinoe III, the queen, would be strange in a text like this, as she shared the official cult of Philopator. So the date of this text from Lesbos could indeed be set to Philadelphus’ reign, after

²⁷ Cf. *SEG XXXIII* 1183: [Βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου καὶ Ἰ Πτολεμαίου, ἔτους ἔκτου καὶ εἰκοστοῦ μηνὸς Περ[ιτίου], ἡ ἐκκλησίας κυρίας γενομένης ἔδοξεν Ξανθίων τῇ[ι] πόλει[ι] ἡ καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν. Here the epithet υἱός is missing. For the annexation of Lycia and its importance as a result of the diplomatic activity of Ptolemy II in Asia very early in his reign, see Meadows (2006) and (2012). To the present issue it is not so relevant the question if the extension of the Ptolemaic influence in Asia Minor (various towns and sanctuaries in Caria, Lycia, Ionia) was due to the so-called First Syrian War, or to the diplomacy of Ptolemy II (as I also believe), or perhaps to both: what is important is that the Ptolemaic influence in that area was positively possible starting from the 270s, see also Van Bremen (2003) 12, who, on the other hand, stresses that not all the territories of Caria, for example, were under Ptolemaic rule.

²⁸ Ll. 7-9: ὁ δᾶμος στεφάνοι | Δᾶμον Ὀρίω ἱρατεύσαντ[α βασιλεος Πτολεμαίω τῷ] | [Π]τολεμαίω καὶ Πτολεμαίω τῷ υἱῷ αὐτῷ ... See also, for a more recent revision of the inscription, Hodot (1976) 57-58, and pl. XIIIa.

²⁹ Habicht (1970²) 109; Bagnall (1976) 162.

³⁰ Just an example, *P. Gurob* 12 (209 BC): [β]ασιλεύοντος [Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου καὶ Βερενίκης θεῶν] | [Εὐ]εργετῶν καὶ [Πτολεμαίου τοῦ υἱοῦ ἔτους ιγ ἐφ’ ἱερέως τοῦ] | . . . λε .[.]ορ .[.] Α[καὶ θεῶν Σωτήρων καὶ θεῶν Ἀδελφῶν] | καὶ θεῶν Εὐεργετῶν καὶ θεῶν Φιλοπατόρων, ἀθλοφόρου Βερενίκης] | Εὐεργετίδος Εἰρήνης τῆς Μητροφάνους, κανηφόρου Ἀρσινόης] | Φιλαδέλφου [Γ]αμνείας τῆς – ca.11 – μηνὸς Δίου ., Αἰγυπτίων] | δὲ Φαρ[μ]οῦ[θι] κε.

268 and before 259, as strongly argued by P. Brun, who criticized Bagnall's paleographical analysis³¹, though a *non liquet* seems more prudent.

The date of the Milesian inscription which records an important letter by Ptolemy II, *I. Milet* 139, has been much discussed as well. The document is noteworthy because it consists of three texts, a letter of Ptolemy II (ll. 1-15) who declared his satisfaction for the good relations between himself and the city and the alliance officially signed, and two decrees of the city (ll. 16-21 and 22-59), which confirm the formal alliance between king Ptolemy and the city through an oath³². The first passage, which is in the royal letter, informs us that a son of the king was in Miletus together with the well-known admiral Callicrates and other, presumably less important, *philoi*³³. In the second passage, which is in the second decree, the son, in lacuna, seems to be the object of the city's devotion to the royal family expressed in a universal oath to keep forever the alliance with Ptolemy and his descendants³⁴. With few exceptions, like Tarn, who dated the whole dossier to the mid-seventies³⁵ or Bencivenni, who prefers a different reconstruction of the entire context and dates it just after the rebellion of Ptolemy the Son together with Timarchus³⁶, the date of this correspondence has been fixed around 262-260 after a short period of troubles marked by Apollo as eponymous³⁷. I am not convinced that this solution suits the text: according to the editor and all the scholars who have followed his interpretation, the son of Ptolemy was mentioned not only by the king in his letter to Miletus, but also by the proponent of the second decree, in

³¹ Cf. Brun (1991) 106-109.

³² An updated bibliography and a thorough resume of the contents and discussions on this text in Bencivenni (2013).

³³ Ll. 8-10 (the king is speaking): γέγραφεγ γ[άρ] | μοι ὁ τε νῖος καὶ Καλλικράτης καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι φίλοι οἱ παρ' ὑμῖν ὄντες ἦν ἅ-| πόδειξιν πεποιήσθε τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐνοίας.

³⁴ Ll. 42-44: ἵνα] | δὲ κ[αὶ εἰς τ]ὸ λοιπὸν ὁ δῆμος φαίνεται πρόθυμον αὐτὸν παρε-
χόμενος τῷ τ[ε] | [νῖω κ]αὶ αὐτῷ, ...

³⁵ Tarn (1930) 446. In his article Tarn stressed that the renewal of the alliance between Ptolemy II and Miletus, which was the matter of the inscription, was to be related not to the Chremonidean, but to the First Syrian War.

³⁶ Bencivenni (2013) 314-315. She envisages the possibility that the son mentioned in the texts was the future Euergetes, dating the correspondence just after the exclusion of the co-ruler.

³⁷ See the bibliography given by Herrman (1997) 172-173. Apollo is eponymous from 266/65 to 263/62, cf. *I. Milet* 123, ll. 53-56. On the other hand, also in the seventies Apollo was eponymous, in 276/75 and 275/74, cf. *I. Milet* 123, ll. 43-44. Recently the date of the inscription to the Chremonidean period has been accepted by Hauben (2013) 48.

the lacuna at ll. 43-44³⁸. This is difficult to accept. Besides the problem that the mention of a naval attack to the city and of “many other wars”³⁹ against Miletus in the sixties are unknown, as Tarn already stressed, it is important to consider some issues of the king’s letter and of the second decree. Ptolemy II recalls the good relations of the city and his father, Ptolemy I⁴⁰; on the other hand, Peithenes, the proponent, confirms such friendship recalling the honors given to the Savior in the past⁴¹. In fact, the stone bearing the decree had to be placed near the temple of Apollo, close to the statue of Ptolemy Theos the Saviour⁴². The devotion to the memory of Ptolemy I is closely reminiscent of the honors received by Callicrates in his homeland, Samos, where a statue was dedicated to him in the sanctuary of the Savior⁴³, an interesting coincidence. Moreover, according to the edition, the son of Ptolemy II is mentioned by the city only in lacuna, at l. 44 (ὁ δῆμος φαίνεται πρόθυμον αὐτὸν παρεχόμενος τῷ τ[ε] | [υἱὶ κ]αὶ αὐτῷ), in a very unpolite position, preceding his father; otherwise, the decrees name the “descendants” of king Ptolemy, that is Ptolemy II⁴⁴.

³⁸ Ll. 43-44: ἵνα | δὲ κ[αὶ εἰς τ]ὸ λοιπὸν ὁ δῆμος φαίνεται πρόθυμον αὐτὸν παρεχόμενος τῷ τ[ε] | [υἱὶ κ]αὶ αὐτῷ... By the way, the proponent is Πειθένους Θαρσαγόρου, who is known as *stephanephoros* in 261/60, *I. Milet* 123, l. 58. This evidence has also been considered a reason to date the decree in the sixties, but I do not see why he could not have been active 10-15 years before, as a Lagid supporter.

³⁹ Cf. Tarn (1930) 449. *I. Milet* 139, ll. 32-33: καὶ νῦν πολέμων καταλαβόντων πολλῶ[v] | καὶ μεγάλων ἡμᾶς καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν καὶ τῶν [ἐ]γανγίων ἐ[πι-] | πλευσάντων ἐπὶ τῇ πόλιν ἡμῶν. Such dating is even less probable if the reading would be Αἰγυπτίων, instead of ἐναντίων, as Bencivenni suggests. Actually this reading, after checking the stone in the Pergamon store, does not seem to fit the traces.

⁴⁰ Ll. 3-7: ὡς προσήκον ἦν | διὰ τὸ καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον ὄραν οἰκείως τε πρὸς τὴν πόλιν δια- | κείμενον καὶ πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν παραίτιον ὑμῖν γενόμενον καὶ φόρων τε | σκληρῶν καὶ χαλεπῶν ἀπολύσαντα καὶ παραγωγίων παρ’ ὑμῖν, ἃ τινες | τῶν βασιλέων κατέστησαν...

⁴¹ Ll. 23-27: ἐπειδὴ, τοῦ δήμου καὶ πρότερον ἐλ[ο]- | μένου τὴν φιλίαν καὶ τὴν συμμαχίαν τῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ σωτῆρ[α] | Πτολεμαῖον, συνέβη τὴν τε πόλιν | εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν ἐλθεῖν καὶ τ[ὸν] | δῆμον πολλῶν καὶ μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἀξιοθῆναι, δι’ ἃς αἰτίας ἐτίμησεν | αὐτὸν ὁ δῆμος ταῖς μεγίσταις καὶ καλλίσταις τιμαῖς... Though nothing can be excluded such a statement sounds more plausible after 10 years than after 20 since Soter’s death.

⁴² Ll. 52-54: ἀναγράψαι τὸ ψήφισμα τόδε κα[ὶ] | [τῇ]ν ἐπιστολὴν εἰς στήλην λιθίνην καὶ στήσαι εἰς τὸ ἱερ[ὸ]ν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ τῇ[v] | [εἰκόν]α τῇ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος.

⁴³ *IG* XII 6, 282. The text has got different supplements: the dedication to some *theoi soter*s could actually be both to the Lagid first couple or to gods like the Dioscuri.

⁴⁴ Ll. 44-47: καὶ ἔνορκον αὐ- | [τ]οῖς εἶναι διαφυλάξειν τὴν φιλίαν καὶ τὴν συμμαχίαν τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν | [τῇ] πόλει πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον καὶ τοὺς ἐκγόνους αὐτοῦ τὸν αἰεὶ | χρόνον; ll. 49-51: καὶ διατηρήσειν τὴν φιλία[v] | [κ]αὶ τὴν συμμαχίαν τὴν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον καὶ τοὺς ἐκγό[ου]ς | [α]ὐτοῦ.

After checking the stone⁴⁵, I think that another reading and supplement is possible: the penultimate letter of l. 43, which has been read as a *tau*, can be also the left side of a *py*, the first letter of πατρί. Therefore I suggest that the text could be read ἵνα | δὲ κ[αὶ εἰς τ]ὸ λοιπὸν ὁ δῆμος φαίνεται προθύμον αὐτὸν παρεχόμενος τῷ π[α] | [τρὶ κ]αὶ αὐτῷ, and translated, literally, “in order that, for the future as well, the demos appear to distinguish itself as devoted to the father and to him (*scil.* Ptolemy II)”. The proposal of a general oath of all the citizens “to maintain the friendship and alliance forever” would be a last and new way to honor the two kings, Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, who had been so generous and helpful to the city. In this case, the date 262-260 would be not only unnecessary, but without a serious ground: Ptolemy’s son had been certainly for a while in Miletus together with Callicrates, but the Egyptian legacy was not necessarily still in the city when the letter of his father was discussed in the assembly: in fact the decrees mention only Ἡγέστρατος. Without any evidence that the Son was already associated with his father, there is no reason to date the inscription in the years of the Chremonidean war. The future Ptolemy III is not a good candidate to have been in Miletus with Callicrates: too young in the seventies, then excluded by the brother, whoever he was, in the years preceding the conquest or liberation of the city by Antiochus Theos⁴⁶. But if the son mentioned by Ptolemy II in the inscription was Arsinoe II’s elder son, he was born probably around 299⁴⁷ and could be already old enough to be sent on a diplomatic or even military mission in Asia with the famous Samian admiral in the years immediately after the settlement of the Ptolemaic military base in Samos, in order to enforce the net of allies and supporters in that region⁴⁸. To sum up, I would prefer a date as early as 275-270, and in this case obviously the young man, whoever he was, was not yet ‘co-regent’. Finally, it is relevant to observe

⁴⁵ I warmly thank Frau Sylvia Brehme, of the Antike Sammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, for the kind help in taking me to the astonishing store of the Pergamon Museum where the stone is conserved now.

⁴⁶ Although it is not possible to reconstruct a detailed chronological frame, a hint of the emargination of Ptolemy III in this period is *IG* XII 3, 464, where we read that a certain Artemidoros from Perge and the Thereans have offered “temples” (ναοὺς) to the Lagid kings having fostered Ptolemy III (τρέφοντες Πτολεμαίων Πτολεμαίου ἀπὸ Πτολεμαίου ἄνακτος).

⁴⁷ Because according to Justin, 24.3, when their father died, in 281, his younger brother Lysimachos was 16 years, then Ptolemaios had to be 17-19 years old.

⁴⁸ For the sake of completeness Calapà (2011) tried to date a conquest of Ephesus and Ionia by Ptolemy II in the seventies by two inscriptions dedicated to an Arsinoe. The inscriptions have been dated, correctly, to the reign of Philopator by Meadows (2013).

that again the only acting king in both the royal letter and in the Milesian decrees is, in any case, Ptolemy II.

There is another epigraphical document which mentions a son of Ptolemy II who was not Ptolemy III: this is *I. Labraunda* 3, which mentions a “Ptolemy, brother of king Ptolemy”. The inscription must be from 240, more or less, and the brother a half-brother of Euergetes, since his only brother born to Arsinoe I was a Lysimachus. Was he the same Son we have seen so far? It is possible, as Domingo Gygax maintains, that he was an illegitimate son of the king, but it is much less likely that, as such, he was also co-regent, and certainly not in that period.

ICONOGRAPHY

Until few years ago Ptolemy the Son was identified in a representation and in the text on the Mendes stele⁴⁹, but recently this identification has been challenged and it has been suggested that the male figures on it, which had been considered of the Son, are actually of the same Ptolemy II in different moments of his reign, before and after Arsinoe’s death⁵⁰. If this is true, as far as I know, at the moment there is no representation of Ptolemy the Son, in or outside Egypt.

PAPYRI

Ptolemy the Son, as we have already seen, is regularly recorded in the official eponymous titulatures of almost all the demotic or Greek documents, such as deeds, loans, and so on, which usually give the regnal year and the Alexandrian date, between 268/67 and the end of 259 BC⁵¹. No problems, nor uncertainty, in the formula: actually papyri and the inscription from Xanthus, where a dating formula like that of the papyri is recorded, are the only trustworthy evidence for the association of a second *basileus*.

⁴⁹ Cf. Derchain (1985).

⁵⁰ Nilsson (2012) 96.

⁵¹ An exception for instance is *P. Hib.* 1, 100: βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου (ἔτους) ιθ: in 267/66, Ptolemy the Son was already mentioned in the titulatures and should be recorded in this one.

To sum up: as I suggested earlier, the most probable candidate for identification as the Son in the official titulatures appears to be Ptolemy the son of Lysimachus and Arsinoe II, adopted at the time of her marriage to Ptolemy in Egypt, in a sort of reciprocal, contemporaneous official exchange of children: this Ptolemy would then be about 30 years old⁵². But the evidence for this co-opting to such an official position is restricted to the dating formulas, both in the papyri and in the only inscription which undoubtedly mentions him.

For 10 years it seems that Egypt and its possessions, the documents having a double mention, had two kings; and some scholars have even stated that the younger one was in charge of the Ionian area⁵³ because this is what is involved in a co-regency. But was this really the case? Or rather, what kind of co-regency was this?

After Alexander's death we know that there were several cases of kings jointly in charge: e.g. Philip III and Alexander IV, Antigonus and Demetrius, Seleucus and Antiochus, and, in the time of Ptolemy II, Antiochus I and Seleucus first, and then Antiochus II. In the first case, that of Philip and Alexander, it is obvious that the presence of the child had a dynastic aim and formed a sort of memento of the continuity of the Argead family, and, despite the limitations of Philip himself, the inscriptions show the kings acting together⁵⁴. The motivation of the co-ruling of Antigonus and Demetrius is well described by Diodorus' tale: the glorious victory of Demetrius over Ptolemy in the struggle for Cyprus was rewarded by the father with the diademe. From that moment on, we find both of them mentioned as *basileis*⁵⁵. In the other cases, in contrast, already in antiquity, co-regency has always been interpreted as both an official designation to the succession, and as a way of controlling the kingdom in a more efficient

⁵² See above note 47.

⁵³ Cf., for instance, Shipley (1987) 186, who compares the "appointment of Ptolemy the Son to the Ionians territories with Seleucus' earlier appointment of his son and co-regent Antiochus to the Upper Satrapies"; Hazzard (2000) 169: "Very early in 267, Ptolemy II appointed a son as co-regent, added his name to the dating formula, and about 262, gave him an administrative role in Ionia. The kingdom then had two *basileis*, Ptolemy II at Alexandria and Ptolemy the son at Ephesus". Apart from the chronological change, there is no ground to any of these statements. En passant, also Ma (2004) 34 (p. 41 of the English edition) considers Ptolemy the Son "in high command in Asia Minor".

⁵⁴ See Arena (1999) 79-80. Arena correctly noted that no inscriptions of the two kings was conceived in the Macedonian chancellery, but to our issue it is anyway relevant that they were recorded in the plural form. On this coregency in Egypt see Schäfer (2014).

⁵⁵ See Diod. Sic. 20.53; and e.g. *IG* IV² 1, 68.

way, as for example in the case of Seleucus and Antiochus I⁵⁶. So, was Ptolemy II guaranteeing this son's succession? And if so, why so early on? Apparently, Ptolemy II may have been influenced by his own experience. Scholars often write that Philadelphus would repeat what his father had done in 285/84: Soter would associate the youngest son as an official declaration that he had chosen him over Ptolemy Ceraunus. I do not agree with this reconstruction for three reasons: first, literary sources tell us that Ptolemy Soter left power and abdicated in favour of Ptolemy II, not sharing his sovereignty with him⁵⁷; secondly, this is confirmed by all the papyri that survive, particularly demotic ones, which record a precise counting of the regnal years with no association of father and son and no overlapping; thirdly, Ptolemy I was about 80 at the time of his abdication, in 269 Ptolemy II was only 40.

Did Ptolemy II really need help in ruling his kingdom? Its political or military expansion in Asia Minor and in the Aegean islands had certainly become increasingly extended in the first ten years of his reign⁵⁸, but could it be compared to the extension and, what is even more important, the political and administrative structure of Seleucus' kingdom? Evidently not. And what is more important, all the evidence shows, as far as we know, that the political and administrative organization of all the

⁵⁶ Cf. App. Syr. 11.59 (transl. Loeb): "Seleucus, while still living, appointed his son, Antiochus, king of upper Asia in place of himself"; *ibid.* 61: "and saying that as he (*scil.* Seleucus) was now growing old it was hard for him to govern it on account of its size. 'I wish', he said, 'to divide it, in the interests of your (*scil.* of the army) future safety, and to give a part of it now to those who are dearest to me (*scil.* Antiochus and Stratonike)'. To solve the problem of ruling too large a kingdom also by sharing it with the successor could evidently seem a good idea to Antiochus I as well: it is not certain, but probably he actually shared the kingdom first with his elder son Seleucus (who nevertheless is not included in the list of reigning kings of the dynasty), then with Antiochus II, see the dating protocols of e.g. TAM V 2, 880, ll. 2-3 (276/75 BC): βασιλευόντων Ἀντιόχου | καὶ Σελεύκου τοῦ Ἀντιόχου ἑβδόμου καὶ τριακοστοῦ ἔτους; I Stratonikeia 1030, ll. 1-3 (268 BC): [βασιλευόντων Ἀντιόχου καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἀντί] | [ό]χου, ἔτους τετάρτου καὶ τεσσαρακοστ[οῦ]. See for the general problem of the organization of the kingdom, particularly by the institution of a co-regency, Capdetrey (2007) 79ff.

⁵⁷ Cf. Iustin. 16.2.7-9: *Finito bello Ptolomeus cum magna rerum gestarum gloria moritur. Is contra ius gentium minimo natu ex filiis ante infirmitatem regnum tradiderat eiusque rei populo rationem reddiderat; cuius non minor fauor in accipiendo quam patris in tradendo regno fuerat. Inter cetera patris et filii mutuae pietatis exempla etiam ea res amorem populi iuueni conciliauerat, quod pater regno publice ei tradito priuatus officium regi inter satellites fecerat omnique regno pulchrius regis esse patrem duxerat.* If the last statement can be considered as Trogus' emphasis on the paternal love of the Soter, the abdication seems more than plausible.

⁵⁸ Ma (2004) 32-34; Meadows (2012) 133.

possessions outside Egypt was based on the authority of *strategoi*, or other high officials, or even members of the royal family, as in II BC, but never in the capacity of co-rulers⁵⁹.

It can be easily noticed that in all the evidence of the so-called co-regency, even in the dating formulas, the mention of the king is in the singular: “*basileuontos Ptolemaiou AND Ptolemy the son*”. Moreover the *protagmata*, the royal decrees of the period of the co-regency, dated in the 260s, are actually recorded as issued by king Ptolemy II alone⁶⁰, whereas in other dynasties, the plural is regularly found for the co-rulers⁶¹.

The use of the singular cannot be considered as a special usage of the Egyptian chancellery or a casual choice: we know that later, in the second century (from the reign of Cleopatra I with the young Ptolemy VI on), when there were true co-regencies, among siblings or parents and children, the dating formulas or the protocols of the *protagmata* were given in the plural, and, in all kinds of document, co-ruling kings and queens are named in the plural, as *basileis*⁶².

If then Ptolemy the Son was not truly a co-ruler of his father (adoptive and/or biological), and if he did not possess any real autonomy as a ruler, at least as far as we can see in the texts that we have, why was he named *basileus* beside his father for 10 years?

We can only speculate that he was named in much the same way as was a queen, beside the king but with no power or, rather, with power only to advertise the Ptolemaic royal family in Egypt, and even more as a reminder of the political prestige and perhaps the rights inherited

⁵⁹ The role played by Ptolemy the Son when, according to the identification here accepted, he was given the *dorea* of Telmessos, was more of a dynast, as others in the Seleucid kingdom, cf. Capdetrey (2007) 117 and 122-123. Another relevant aspect is the lack of any interference of the Egyptian king in the monetary system of the territories outside Egypt, except for Cyprus, Cyrene and Palestine.

⁶⁰ Cf., e.g., *C. Ord. Ptol.* 18 = *P. Rev.* 37, ll. 2-5 (Nov-Dec 263): [βασιλε]ὺς Πτολεμαῖος [τοῖς στρατηγοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν] | [καὶ] τοῖς ἡγεμόσι καὶ τοῖς νομάρχαις καὶ τοῖς τοπάρχαις καὶ τοῖς | [οἰκονόμοις καὶ τοῖς ἀντιγραφείοις καὶ τοῖς βασιλικοῖς γραμματεῦσι] καὶ τοῖς λιβύρχαις καὶ τοῖς ἀρχιφυλακίταις πᾶσι χαίρειν; *C. Ord. Ptol.* 22, ll. 1-4 = *SB* V 8008, ll. 33-36 (260 BC): βασιλέως προστάξαντος· εἴ τινες τῶν κατὰ Συρίαν καὶ Φοινίκην ἀγοράκασιν σῶμα λαϊκὸν ἐλεύθερον ἢ ἐξενέν-| [κασιν] καὶ κατεσχ[ή]κασιν ἢ κατ’ ἄλλον τρόπον κέκ[την-] | [νται]; but also *C. Ord. Ptol.* 20.

⁶¹ See above note 56 and add also e.g. *IG* II² 469 (κατὰ τὴν προ-) | [αἱρεσιν τῶν βασιλέων Ἀντιγόνοῦ καὶ Δημη-] | [τρίου].

⁶² See, e.g., *P. Tebt.* III 811: [βασιλευόντων Πτολεμαίου καὶ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ] [καὶ Κλεοπάτρας τῆς ἀδελφ[ῆς]] τ[ῶν Πτολεμαίου καὶ Κλεοπάτρας] [θε]ῶ[ν] Ἐ[πιφανῶν] ἔτους πέμπτου.

by his mother Arsinoe (and possibly his biological father Lysimachus) in Asia and Macedonia. The idea (by Callicrates' entourage?) was probably a happy one, the actual co-regency was not. But why did it end? We can only speculate. A possible reconstruction is that Callicrates, with other supporters of Arsinoe II and of a strong initiative towards Macedonia, had insisted for an at least formal co-regency to emphasize the potential role of the Son (similar to that adopted by Philopator with his child 60 years later), when, after Arsinoe's death the political plans regarding the Greece, conceived first by Ptolemy I and then developed by his youngest son, seemed to fail. After the end of the Chremonidean war, a more moderate party, perhaps favorable to balance the defeat by an agreement with Cyrene, and to react to the endangering situation in Asia, had convinced the king to remove her sister's son and to change his policy.

The young Macedonian monarchies, born by graft from foreign roots, had to change the tradition in order to cope with different environments and the fast evolution of the new political world. Co-ruling became a convenient, common solution to control oversized kingdoms and to solve in advance the problem of the transmission of power from a generation to another. Ptolemy I did not adopt it, but often preferred his grounded predilection to the traditional family links: he left his wife's son Magas in Cyrene, as a vice-king, and chose his youngest son as successor. If ever Ptolemy II thought to imitate what the Syrian kings were doing, and I am not convinced at all, he was soon compelled to give up: after all, tradition was still the best solution.

The Egyptian kingdom apparently did not suffer when the co-regency was broken, simply because it had not really had much effect. When this was over, some form of agreement was found, seemingly after a short crisis: the Son was given a 'principate' in Lycia, a province where, at that time, he could be easily controlled. Ptolemy II began a new phase of his reign, during which his elder son Ptolemy was to play a strategic role through his engagement to his cousin Berenike; Ptolemy II's daughter would become the queen of Syria seven years later, so recovering for a short time a strong Ptolemaic influence in Asia; Greece was left to the side for some years. The attention of the Ptolemaic king was once again on Asia and Africa.

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THE PRICE (*TIMÊ*) OF THE SILVER STATER IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT*

Abstract: After the introduction of the bronze standard in Ptolemaic Egypt, the value (*timê*) of the silver stater was often expressed in terms of bronze drachms. Papyri that have been cited in connection with this accounting practice are reviewed to purge the record of dubious evidence, to narrow some dates on the basis of numismatic criteria, and to test scholarly models of inflation in the second century BC. The evidence falls into three periods. For the first half-century after the introduction of the bronze standard there are very few valuations of the stater and none datable before 171. The tendency to use coined silver in pledges instead of spending it and the farming of the exchange monopoly to goldsmiths rather than bankers suggest that the coinage did not function in an interchangeable, bimetallic currency system for most of this period. The second period, defined by bank records of the reign of Ptolemy VIII, features slightly higher valuations that fluctuate within a narrow range. Beginning in 115, the third period is characterized by numerous different sources and greater volatility of the valuations, which are on average higher than those of the second period but also sometimes lower. The increase in the value of the stater is shown to be more gradual and less severe than assumed in the most influential scholarly models.

The *timê* (price) of the silver stater is its value in terms of units of the so-called bronze standard, the system of valuation that dominated Ptolemaic accounting from the late third century BC to the end of the dynasty.¹

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¹ In the scholarship pertaining to the bronze standard, bronze was inaccurately referred to as copper until the late twentieth century. For the sake of simplicity, the present paper will refer to the metal as bronze, regardless of the usage of the original author. The unit of the bronze standard was explicitly identified as the drachm at a relatively early date, as indicated by use of the drachm sign in *SB XXII 15236* (= *P. Mich.* inv. 7022), dated to the late third or early second century by Sijpesteijn (1993) 51–52 (and see p. 57, commentary on ll. 12 and 17, for discussion of the drachm sign). Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 59–60, followed by Picard & Faucher (2012) 61–62, claimed that the nature of the unit remained implicit until the late Ptolemaic period and the former authors cited the wheat loan contracts *P. Dion* 14 (Akoris, 110) and *P. Dion.* 16 (Akoris, 109) as perhaps the first documents to identify the unit explicitly as a drachm. In general, explicit identification of the unit was a late practice. *P. Tebt.* I 209 (after 12 April 75) is the earliest document in our dossier of texts relating to the *timê* of the stater to identify the drachm explicitly. Maresch, in Grone-wald e.a. (2013) 127, mentioned the presence of the drachm symbol in *P. Köln XIII 527* as one of the indications suggesting a date in the reign of Cleopatra VII.

As recorded in documentary sources, the *timê* of the stater very rarely reflects an actual monetary exchange; usually such valuations served to enable the integration of silver coins into accounts kept in bronze. This is consistent with the scarcity of documents that associate a *timê* of the stater with *allagê*, the fee imposed when bronze coinage was substituted or exchanged for silver.²

The valuation of silver in terms of bronze drachms was almost exclusively a Greek accounting practice. Except for the demotic marriage contract *P. Tor. Amenother* 1, discussed below, I know of no equivalent in demotic documents; when a demotic contract involved objects in precious metal, these were normally evaluated separately from amounts valued in bronze currency.³

The *timê* of the stater is attested preponderantly in Middle Egypt including the Fayum. In the dossier of sources, insofar as provenances are known, 29 documents are from Middle Egypt and only four from Upper Egypt (see Tables 1-4). This geographical bias is not the result of accidents of survival; financial documents from Upper Egypt exist in numbers, but they rarely provide valuations of the stater in terms of the bronze standard.

The chronological distribution of valuations of the stater is also significantly uneven. Three distinct periods can be defined. Most of the examples that have been cited for the reigns of Ptolemy V Epiphanes and Ptolemy VI Philometor are problematic in one way or another, and these will be a major focus of this paper. In contrast, the *timê* of the stater is well attested in bank records of the Herakleopolite nome dating from the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (see Table 2). Records of the royal bank of the Herakleopolite nome, *P. Herakl. Bank* (Herakleopolites, c. 138-136⁴),

² The examples are *O. Bodl.* I 314 (Thebes, first half of the second century or 130-30) and *O. Wilck.* II 1496 (Thebes, 17 May 115). The first seemingly reflects an exchange of 17 silver staters for bronze with the explicit addition of *allagê*. The second involves a tax payment probably for the *stephanos*, a tax levied in silver but here apparently paid in bronze; the amount of the payment is calculated in bronze at the rate of 1,800 drachms per stater, then increased by the banker to 2,000 drachms without explicit mention of *allagê*. The term *diaphoron* in *P. Tebt.* I 120 (Tebtunis, after 6 October 97 or 28 September 64) was interpreted by the editors of the text as a fee for exchanging bronze for silver, but there is neither mention of *allagê* or an unexplained surcharge.

³ Examples include *P. dem. Bib. Nat.* 236 (169), Vittmann (1982); *P. Ryl.* 16 (Pathyris, 5 April 152); *P. Strasb.* 56 (Thebes, 8 May 117); *P. Ryl.* 20 (Pathyris, 29 October 116); *P. Ryl.* 22 (Pathyris, 115-108); *P. Frankf.* = *Ehevertrag* 41 (Hermonthis, 24 December 109); *P. Strasb.* 43 (Pathyris, 3 March 99); *P. Adler* 14 (Pathyris, October/November 97); *P. Adler* 21 (Pathyris, 1 August 92).

⁴ Maresch (2012) 9-13, established the date on prosopographical grounds.

show that the bank kept its accounts in bronze and registered deposits of precious metal, whether coined or not, as purchases; conversely, disbursements of precious metal were recorded as sales.⁵ In *P. Herakl. Bank* the silver tetradrachm is “purchased” for amounts ranging from 1,520 to 1,620 bronze drachms, and “sold” for amounts ranging from 1,590 to 1,640 bronze drachms.⁶ The valuations in the approximately contemporary bank record *P. Tebt.* III 2 890, also from the Herakleopolites, are similar but very slightly lower, 1,510 to 1,580 bronze drachms for deposits and 1,500 to 1,600 bronze drachms for disbursements.⁷ In both cases the relatively narrow range of stater values gives the impression that there must have been an official but adjustable rate, and that individual coins might have been evaluated on the basis of their weight or fineness. *Allagê* is not mentioned in these bank records nor is a surcharge added to value of silver when it is “sold.” This period yields only one valuation of the stater from a private context, *P. Rein.* II 109 (origin unknown, 23 April–22 May 131). It values the stater at 1,640 bronze drachms, equivalent to the highest “sale” price of the royal bank of the Herakleopolite nome.

The *timê* of the silver stater is not attested again in a securely dated document until *O. Wilck.* II 1496 (Thebes, 17 May 115), where the value of the stater is 1,800 bronze drachms. From this time forward *timai* of the stater occur with some frequency in texts of various kinds, both official and private (see Table 3).⁸ The values range from 1,340 bronze drachms

⁵ Maresch (2012) 48–58.

⁶ Maresch (2012) 72–73.

⁷ Maresch (2012) 74. The original editors suggested a date in the early second century, and this is retained on HGV and DDbDP. Maresch (2012) 14 presented three arguments for the contemporaneity of *P. Tebt.* III 2 890 with *P. Herakl. Bank*: (1) the smallest monetary unit mentioned in each is 5 drachms, implying a date after 130/28; (2) the rare name Italos appears in both; and (3) the value of the stater is similar in both. The first argument is, in the view of the present author, dubious, as there is no numismatic evidence for a currency reform c. 130. The repeated appearance of silver staters in *P. Tebt.* III 2 890, sometimes in quantity, could perhaps be consistent with a date c. 170, when Ptolemy VI probably produced a large issue of silver tetradrachms and some didrachms to finance the planned reconquest of Coele Syria and Phoenicia. But the terminology of *P. Tebt.* III 2 890 is completely different from other accounts of this period (see below), and this argues in favor of a later date for the text. The Alexandria mint only resumed regular production of silver tetradrachms in 155/4, and this at a low level, see Olivier (2012) 657–658. The supply of coined silver grew slowly and it is likely that the availability of tetradrachms in *P. Tebt.* III 2 890 reflects conditions in the reign of Ptolemy VIII.

⁸ See also the list in Maresch (1996) 196–198.

in *BGU* VIII 1885 (first century) to 2,000 bronze drachms in several different texts.⁹ In documents of this third period, as in the bank records, the value of the stater can vary (within modest limits) in a single papyrus or on a single day in the same location.¹⁰ The value of the stater can vary more dramatically from one document to another, sometimes within a short period of time. From the late second century to the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty there is no obvious chronological pattern.¹¹

The purpose of this paper is to produce a dossier of reliable evidence for the *timê* of the stater. It offers a critical examination of earlier texts that have been cited as providing valuations of silver in terms of bronze. Numismatic criteria can narrow the dates of some of these documents, and this methodology is also applicable to some later texts attesting *timai* of the stater. Once the record is purged of dubious evidence and ordered chronologically insofar as possible, we can look for patterns in the data and compare the results with the theories presented in earlier scholarship.

SCHOLARLY VIEWS CONCERNING THE VALUE OF THE STATER

In 1902, in an appendix to volume I of *The Tebtunis Papyri*, B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt delivered the *coup de grace* to the then-accepted theory that Ptolemaic silver and bronze coinage were related by an invariant ratio of 1:120 after the introduction of the bronze standard.¹² Undergirding their rebuttal were the many *timai* of the stater in the Tebtunis papyri which implied monetary ratios from 1:375 to 1:500. Thereafter papyrologists and economic historians sought to construct a grand synthesis of commodity prices, wages, and values of the stater, based on the assumption that stater values reflected underlying monetary ratios between silver and bronze which governed all aspects of the economy. T. Reinach

⁹ For *timai* of 2,000 drachms, see *PSI* I 64 (Choiak of year 2, thus 116 or 80); *P. Tebt.* I 135 (19 April 111); *SB* XVIII 14012 (21 Mecheir year 16, thus 99/8, 66/5, or 37/6); *BGU* VI 1292 (80/79).

¹⁰ As noted by Segrè (1942) 190; Gara (1984) 119; Verhoogt (2005) 13; Cavagna (2010) 210. The example of the bank records suggests the possibility that these modest variations could reflect a distinction between inpayments and outpayments, but analysis of the accounts does not support this interpretation.

¹¹ As already concluded by Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 60; Cavagna (2010) 209-210; Picard & Faucher (2012) 62.

¹² Grenfell & Hunt (1902). For a detailed history of earlier scholarship, see Cavagna (2010) 15-78.

deduced a transitional period, c. 203–c. 160, in which the official ratio was 1:60 but could reach 1:68–70 in practice; after c. 160, and for the remainder of the Ptolemaic period, the ratio varied between 1:375 and 1:500, with an average of 1:450.¹³ F. Heichelheim also accepted a ratio of 1:60 for the first quarter of the second century, but placed the transition to ratios of 1:400–500 slightly earlier, in the years between 173 and 168; he attributed this extreme inflationary episode to an intentional devaluation of the coinage, either through debasement or a reduction in the bronze weight standard, motivated by the state's desire to lighten its debt burden.¹⁴ A. Segrè presented a model of gradually increasing monetary ratios which rose from 1:10–12 at the turn of the second century, stabilizing at about 1:450 in the years 150–140, with oscillations of up to 10% above and below the average both during the inflationary period and after stabilization.¹⁵ Building on the work of Heichelheim, T. Reekmans hypothesized an elaborate history for the so-called drachm of copper.¹⁶ After the introduction of the bronze standard at a ratio of 1:60, he posited a halving in the (theoretical) weight of the bronze drachm in 183, resulting in a doubling of the face values of bronze coins (i.e., a ratio of 1:120), but without any visible change to the coinage.¹⁷ This process was repeated in 173, raising the silver:bronze ratio to 1:240, and again in 130, raising the ratio to 1:480.¹⁸ Reekmans assumed that the value of the stater was linked to these changing silver:bronze ratios and increased stepwise over time with each successive devaluation of the bronze coinage, reaching its peak after 130/127.¹⁹ K. Maresch retained Reekmans' periodization with one minor change, dating the second rise in price levels around 171–168 rather than 173, but he developed an even more elaborate theory of the relation of the silver and bronze currencies.²⁰ A. Cavagna proposed a simplification of Reekmans' model, with only three periods based on

¹³ Reinach (1928) 163–176.

¹⁴ Heichelheim (1930) 29–31.

¹⁵ Segrè (1942) 174–177, 192. Segrè rejected the assumption that commodity prices were based directly on the rate of exchange between silver and bronze and developed exponential functions in order to interpolate price data with metallic ratios.

¹⁶ Reekmans (1951).

¹⁷ Reekmans (1951) 83–85.

¹⁸ Reekmans (1951) 87, 94–95, 97, 104.

¹⁹ Reekmans (1951) 103. Reekmans' theories have been influential in papyrology, see Clarysse & Lanciers (1989); Pestman (1993) 347–350; Sipjesteijn (1993) 58; von Reden (2010) 151.

²⁰ Maresch (1996) 12–13, 30–32, 61–64, 82.

the increasing price levels of grain and hence three official rates for the value of the stater, also rising in stepwise fashion and reaching their maximum in the second half of the second century.²¹ Leaving aside inflation in the price of commodities, O. Picard notionally juxtaposed a steadily rising value of silver/falling value of bronze coins and a decline in the weights of bronze coins.²² Maresch was unique among these scholars in preferring to situate the highest values for the stater in the first half of the second century, on the grounds that the *timê* of the stater was determined by the rarity of silver as well as by silver:bronze ratios; in his view, the increasing availability of coined silver in the second half of the second century counteracted a halving of the weight of the bronze coinage c. 130/27 so that the *timê* of the stater was not greatly affected.²³ The schemata of Reekmans and Maresch have been used to date documents that are not explicitly dated. We shall exclude such hypothetical dates as we reexamine the texts.

EARLY VALUATIONS OF THE STATER

A pawnbroker's account, *SB XXII 15236* (= *P. Mich. Inv. 7022*), was dated by its editor P. Sijpesteijn to the late third or early second century on palaeographic grounds.²⁴ Sijpesteijn also observed that the sums given for various pawned objects are higher than in third-century texts and must be reckoned on the bronze standard.²⁵ Line 47 records a loan to Arsinoe of only 80 (bronze) drachms against a pledged silver stater. As is usual with such secured small loans, the value placed on the stater by the pawnbroker must have exceeded the amount of the loan, but we cannot know by how much. The amount of the loan was determined by Arsinoe's need for cash, not by the value of the pledge. (She would not have incurred the obligation to pay interest on money she did not need.) However, the same account records several larger loans against pledges of seemingly everyday objects: 200 drachms for a new piece of cloth

²¹ Cavagna (2010) 211: 193/2–188/7, 300–500 bronze drachms per stater; 180–150, 1,000–1,500(?) bronze drachms per stater; second half of the second century, 2,000 bronze drachms per stater.

²² Picard (2012) 85.

²³ Maresch (1996) 10, 30.

²⁴ Sijpesteijn (1993) 51–52.

²⁵ Sijpesteijn (1993) 51 with n. 3.

(line 28), 200 drachms for a boxwood box (lines 29-30), 160 drachms for a roll of papyrus (lines 42-43), 140 drachms for a threadbare cloak (line 44). If Arsinoë's stater was really worth far more than 80 drachms, it is difficult to understand why she did not pledge a less valuable object. *SB XXII 15236* thus suggests a much lower value for the stater than any of the cases considered below. This document may be the earliest of our sources, according to the date assigned by its editor.²⁶ If so, the resulting pattern of valuations would support most of the scholarly models we wish to test here, namely those that assert that the value of the stater traced a rising trajectory after the introduction of the bronze standard.

To document the relatively low value of the silver stater in the period 183/2–173, Reekmans cited *P. Iand.* VIII 146 (Arsinoites?, c. 180). Fragment 11 of this account records a transaction which Reekmans described as a payment of 5 silver staters to redeem a chiton which had apparently been pawned.

[...]

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 4 | (hand 2) ἐπιθήματ[ος] θ | |
| 5 | εἰς λουτρά* κισθῶνος < ἀργυ(ρίου) ηγ Γσι | |
| 6 | καὶ τόκου | |
| 7 | τῶι παρὰ τ[ο]ῦ στρα(τηγοῦ) σλ.ε | |
| 8 | καὶ εἰς τ(ιμὴν) χλόης ρ | |
| 9 | Πετεσουχίωνι χ | |
| 10 | κάτεργον σίτου Α | |
| 11 | (γίνονται) Γρνε . [. .] | |
| 4 | of a lid 9 | |
| 5 | toward the redemption of a chiton 8 (?) silver drachms 3,210 | |
| 6 | and interest | |
| 7 | to the (representative?) of the <i>stratêgos</i> 235 | |
| 8 | and as the price of fresh greens 100 | |
| 9 | to Petesuchos 600 | |
| 10 | wages for labor on grain 1,000 | |
| 11 | total 3,155 ... | |

The original editor, J. Hummel, doubtfully read the number of silver drachms in line 5 as η γ (8½). He observed that the figure near the margin appeared to be a conversion, but that the exchange rate could not be retrieved due to the smudging and partial destruction of the first figure; if his readings were correct, they would yield a ratio of 1:385, similar to

²⁶ Sijpesteijn (1993) 52 n. 6, added a caveat after describing the palaeographic features pointing toward a third-century date: "[T]he scribe of the present text is not well trained and writes rather woodenly!"

the ratio of 1:375 in *P. Tebt.* 185 (c. 112).²⁷ From the numismatic point of view the figure of 8½ silver drachms is improbable, as it implies that the payment involved a silver diobol or some combination of silver obols and/or hemiobols. Such small denominations had not been struck in silver since the reign of Ptolemy I, and even then they were produced infrequently and in small numbers, making it unlikely that they were still in circulation a century later.²⁸ Reekmans expressed Hummel's ratio as a stater value of 1,540 bronze drachms.²⁹ He found this value unexpectedly high and for that reason rejected the possibility that γ could represent a third of a drachm. He proposed the alternate reading of κ (20) followed by the drachm sign presumably governing the 3,210 drachms that follow, then derived a *timê* of the stater of 642 bronze drachms by dividing 20 silver drachms (5 staters) into 3,210 bronze drachms.³⁰ Maresch disputed the reading of 20 silver drachms, proposing instead 8 silver drachms followed by the drachm sign, in which case the value of the stater would be 1,605 bronze drachms; but because of the uncertain reading he suggested that this text should probably be excluded from the dossier of documents attesting *timai* of the stater.³¹ Unfortunately none of the proposed readings can be checked against the papyrus, because it was destroyed in the Second World War.³² A different problem, which we shall encounter in other texts, is that the relation of the two monetary figures in line 5 is not explicit. The abbreviated notation could record the redemption of a chiton and coined silver which had been left together as a pledge against a loan of 3,210 bronze drachms. There is a parallel for this sort of mixed pledge in *UPZ I* 101 (Memphis, 156), where 8 silver drachms, two *othonia*, a *sindon*, and a female garment are left as a pledge against a loan of 4,500 bronze drachms. If this was the nature of the transaction in *P. Iand.* VIII 146, no

²⁷ *P. Iand.* VIII, p. 367.

²⁸ For the small silver denominations of Ptolemy I, see Gitler & Lorber (2002). The authors recorded 3 extant diobols, 6 obols, and 3 hemiobols, the latest of which were struck c. 295.

²⁹ Reekmans (1951) 83.

³⁰ Reekmans (1951) 83.

³¹ Maresch (1996) 195 n. 1. Neither figure can be excluded on the basis of comparison with other transactions involving chitones. *SB XXII* 13256 (= *P. Mich.* inv. 7022), ll. 6-7, records a loan of 2½ drachms (surely on the silver standard) against a pledged chiton, and l. 54 records another loan of 20 drachms against a pledged chiton. This again is likely to be reckoned on the silver standard, since l. 44 records a loan of 140 drachms against the pledge of a threadbare cloak. Sijpesteijn (1993) 58 remarked on the low value of the first transaction and suggested that the 2½ drachms might be interest rather than the loan itself.

³² Reekmans (1951) 83 n. 2.

bronze equivalent could be deduced for the stater. The further calculations in lines 6-11 do not work out and thus fail to clarify the relation of the 8 (or 20) silver drachms to the 3,210 bronze drachms.

In his discussion of the value of the stater after 173, Reekmans included two examples in which silver staters were left in deposit against a purchase. He considered these transactions as equivalent to pawning, meaning that the deposits were pledges or collateral to ensure future payment, rather than partial payments. In the petition *P. Mich.* III 173 (Arsinoites, 170), Demetrios son of Kephalon initiates a legal action, complaining of failures to redeem pledges left by the purchasers of foodstuffs. In one case Pasinosiris pledged a silver tetradrachm, a small hoe (?), a shovel, and a necklace against a purchase of olives priced at 1,300 bronze drachms.

6 ὁ μὲν Πασινο-
 7 σῖρις ὀφείλων μοι πρὸς τι-
 8 μὴν ἐλάας (δραχμάς) Ἀτ [[καὶ]]
 9 ἀπὸ ἑ τοῦ Μεχεῖρ τοῦ ιβ (ἔτους) καὶ
 10 δεδωκὼς πρὸς ταύτας ὑπόθε-
 11 μα κρήφιον καὶ
 12 ἄμην καὶ ὄρμικσον
 13 καὶ ἀργυρίου ἐπισή-
 14 μου (δραχμάς) δ οὐδ' εἰς τοῦ
 15 νῦν κομίζεται ταξά-
 16 μενος εἰς τὴν ἐχομέ-
 17 νην.

Pasinosiris, owing me 1,300 drachms as the price of olives since 5 Mecheir of year 12 and having given as a pledge against them a small hoe (?) and a shovel and a necklace and 4 drachms of coined silver, does not up to now redeem (them) (despite) having arranged to do so on the following day.

Reekmans reasoned that the highest possible real value of the stater could not have exceeded 1,300 bronze drachms.³³ In fact, we cannot make any specific assumptions about the value of the stater. It was only a part of the pledge, and the real value of the pledge may have substantially exceeded

³³ Reekmans (1951) 92-93, based on the assumptions that the total value of the pledge was “rather unlikely” to have been higher than 2,600 drachms and the value of the stater could “hardly have exceeded half this amount.” Reekmans claimed that Segrè (1942) 183 held a similar opinion about the *pledge* value of the stater. In fact Segrè stated that at the date of the petition the silver drachm had “an exchange rate of less than 425,” based on his model of gradually rising exchange rates. This would be equivalent to a value of less than 1700 drachms for the silver stater.

the value of the purchase in order to compensate for the risk of default and the need for legal action.

A second instance of alleged pawning cited by Reekmans is *P. Tebt.* III 2 891 (Tebtunis, second century, probably reign of Philometor). This account records a purchase of kiki oil from Kallikrates for one bronze talent (6,000 bronze drachms), for which the buyer left a deposit of 8 silver drachms 2,000.

- 2 τιμὴν κίκιος παρὰ
- 3 Καλλικράτου τά(λαντον) α
- 4 καὶ ἅς ἔδωκε ἐφ' ὑποθέματι
- 5 ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμὰς) η Β

the price of kiki oil from Kallikrates 1 talent and what he gave as a pledge 8 silver drachms 2,000

The original editors, followed by Segrè, assumed that the juxtaposition of 8 silver drachms with 2,000 bronze drachms equated them, so that a single stater was valued at 1,000 bronze drachms.³⁴ Reekmans commented that the actual value of the stater must have been considerably higher than the value allowed by the “pawnbroker,” and he estimated a *timê* of 1,500–2,000 bronze drachms per stater.³⁵ Maresch concurred that 1,000 bronze drachms was not a true *timê* of the stater, but did not venture a guess at its actual value.³⁶ The relation between the 8 silver drachms and the 2,000 bronze drachms is not explicit in the text and another possible interpretation is that 2 silver staters and 2,000 bronze drachms were left as a deposit against the purchase. The value of the stater in *P. Tebt.* III 2 891 remains indeterminate.

As the earliest document suggesting the value of the stater after the introduction of the bronze standard, O. Picard and T. Faucher cite *P. Mich.* III 182 (Krokodilopolis, 4 March 182).³⁷ It is an agreement concerning agricultural lands which were mortgaged against a loan of 48 talents in bronze, then leased out to be worked by a group of farmers. The farmers were to pay their rent directly to the mortgage holder, and he was to credit their payments to the account of his debtor. If he failed to credit the rent payments to her account, or if he refused to cancel the

³⁴ Introduction to *P. Tebt.* III 2 891, quoted by Reekmans (1951) 92 n. 1; Segrè (1942) 182-183.

³⁵ Reekmans (1951) 92.

³⁶ Maresch (1996) 195 n. 1.

³⁷ Picard & Faucher (2012) 69.

mortgage after receiving payment in full, he would be liable for a penalty of 1,000 silver drachms:

48 ἐπίτιμον

49 ἀργυρίου τοῦ παλαιοῦ Πτολεμαικοῦ νομίσμα-

50 τος δραχμᾶς χιλίας

penalty 1,000 drachms of silver of the old Ptolemaic coinage

Citing the common penalty of 150% (i.e., τηε *hēmionion*) as the usual penalty for failure to repay a money loan, M. Rostovtzeff calculated a silver:bronze ratio of 1:432, implying a value for the stater of 1,728 bronze drachms.³⁸ Reekmans countered that 1,000 silver drachms was a conventional penalty for breach of contract, unconnected with the value of the loan, and therefore irrelevant to the value of silver in 182.³⁹ In their commentary on this text, F. Burkhalter and O. Picard, followed by Picard and Faucher, stated that the penalty in Ptolemaic contracts was always at least equal to the value of the underlying transaction, so that the penalty here implied a minimum value of 1,200 bronze units for the stater.⁴⁰ These authors neglected to mention that penalties were typically set *higher* than the value of the underlying transaction, in order to create a financial incentive for fulfilling the contract. The typical third century penalties of 4 drachms per artaba of wheat and 2 drachms per artaba of olyra were double the adaerated price of these cereals, and approximately double their average market price.⁴¹ If such a relationship obtained here, the value of the stater would be 2,304 bronze drachms. Each interpretation relies on an assumption not derived from the text itself, which provides no reliable evidence for the value of the stater in 182.

Near the top of his list of stater prices, Maresch cited seven documents, two demotic and five Greek, that allegedly value the stater at more than 2,000 bronze drachms. His interpretations of the demotic texts are difficult to follow. *P. Loeb.* 62 + *P. dem. Berlin* 15558 (Philadelphia, 175/4) concerns a loan of 70 *deben* in bronze (*ḥd 70 hmt*) at the rate of 24½ (obols) per 2 *kite*. (The formula 24½ obols per 2 *kite* is a standard expression of

³⁸ Rostovtzeff (1941) II 719.

³⁹ Reekmans (1951) 83.

⁴⁰ Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 72; Picard & Faucher (2012) 69. In fact, an equation of 48 bronze talents and 1,000 silver drachms yields a value of 1,152 bronze drachms for the stater.

⁴¹ von Reden (2010) 143-144; see also Reekmans (1951) 62 with n. 1; Cadell & Le Rider (1997) 28-29.

the rate of *allagê* to be imposed on the transaction.) On the basis of his monetary theories, Maresch calculated a bronze equivalent for the silver stater.⁴² He equated the unit of these 70 *deben*, that is, a single *deben*, to the well-attested 20 drachms and then multiplied by 120, the supposed silver:bronze ratio at the time, for a total of 2,400 *Rechendrachmen*. Finally he increased this amount to 2,450 *Rechendrachmen* to take account of the stated valuation of the stater at 24½ (obols) per 2 *kite*. He explicitly identified the *deben* with the stater, contrary to its established value of 5 staters, which is clearly expressed in the text by the conversion of *ḥḏ* 70 to *sttr* 350. Furthermore, apart from the final adjustment from 2,400 to 2,450 *Rechendrachmen*, these calculations have nothing to do with the specific figures in the text. *P. Loeb.* 62 + *P. dem Berlin* 15558 cannot be cited as a source for the value of the stater.

In the demotic marriage contract *P. Tor. Amenother* 1 (Thebes, 1 November 171), the goods of the bride include two silver rings weighing 2 *kite* valued at 25 (bronze) *deben* (*ḥḏ sp-2 kt 2 ḥḏ* 25).⁴³ The equivalence of 2 *kite* to one silver stater, together with the equivalence of the *deben* to 5 staters or 20 drachms, yields a value for the stater of 500 bronze drachms. P.W. Pestman observed that the implied ratio of 1:125 was consistent with the ratio of 1:120 posited by Reekmans for the years 183-173 and suggested a delay between the actual marriage and the marriage contract to account for the two-year discrepancy.⁴⁴ Maresch rejected the stater value of 500 bronze drachms as too low and argued at length to justify introducing an additional multiplier of 5 to reach a total of 2,500 bronze drachms.⁴⁵ Perhaps we, too, should be cautious of this valuation of the stater, but for different reasons, bearing in mind that *P. Tor. Amenother* 1 is an outlier within the corpus in terms of its language and geographic origin. It is also an outlier among demotic marriage contracts, being the only one to state the value of a weight of silver in terms of bronze. Subsequent contracts, even the nearly contemporary *P. dem. Bib. Nat.* 236 (169), record separate totals in bronze, silver, and gold if precious metals were included among the goods of the bride.⁴⁶

⁴² Maresch (1996) 49 n. 39.

⁴³ For the most recent analysis of the accounting in this contract, see Gorre (2012) 118-123.

⁴⁴ Pestman (1981) 30, note k.

⁴⁵ Maresch (1996) 43-50.

⁴⁶ See n. 3 for the examples.

The five Greek texts cited by Maresch are *P. Tebt.* III 2 1087; *P. Petr.* II 39 D; *O. Tait.* 314; *UPZ* I 88; and *UPZ* I 93.

The private account *P. Tebt.* III 2 1087 (Tebtunis) was dated hesitantly by its editor to the second quarter of the second century. The date can be confirmed by the mention in line 17 of 22 silver drachms, implying the existence of didrachms or silver drachms. The drachm denomination had not been struck in silver since the reign of Ptolemy II, and no didrachms were issued in Egypt before the reign of Ptolemy VI. Philometor's first large silver issue, probably struck in 170 or shortly before to finance the planned reconquest of Coele Syria, included tetradrachms and a few didrachms (Svoronos 1489 and 1490). The large quantity of silver mentioned in this account — line 17 mentions 330 silver drachms, i.e., 82 staters and one didrachm — tends to support a date around 170.

- 1 (hand 2) ἀπὸ τμ
 - 2 (hand 1) Ἰσχυ(ρίωνι) κ
 - 3 Σπαρτιά(τηι) ρκ
 - 4 Θέωνι ρ
 - 5 ἀνή(λωμα) δι' Ἀθη() λ̄
 - 6 διὰ Παγκρά(τους) κδ
 - 7 Ὀδία Τ...ῶτος/ Ἡρα() τοῦ ε ρ. ερ...
 - 8 διαφο(ρ) ἀνή(λωμ) κδ
 - 9 ὑπη(ρέτηι(?)) Θέωνος οἴγου ἄρτων χα(λχοῦ) ψλ
 - 10 διὰ Τοθο(ήους) Αυπ
 - 11 πρ() οἴνου τά(λαντον) α υ
 - 12 ἐφόδοις [Γ]Ἰσχυ(ρίωνος) Αψ
 - 13 τι(μῆς) ὀριγάνου καὶ ἀρωμάτων
 - 14 διὰ τοῦ προγεγρα(μμένου) Ἰσχυ(ρίωνος) Γρ
 - 15 (γίνονται) ἀργυ(ρίου) τη
 - 16 χα(λκοῦ) τά(λαντα) β Αυι
 - 17 αἱ ἀργυ(ρίου) κβ (γίνονται) τλ
-
- 1 from 340
 - 2 to Ischurion 20
 - 3 to Spartiates 120
 - 4 to Theon 90
 - 5 expenditure through Athe(naios?) 30
 - 6 through Pankrates 24
 - 7 through T...os son of Hera(kleides?) (unintelligible)
 - 8 remaining expenditure 24
 - 9 for the assistant of Theon (price of) wine (and) bread 730 bronze
 - 10 through Totoes 1,480
 - 11 toward [the price of?] wine 1 talent 400
 - 12 for policemen of Ischurion 1,700
 - 13 price of marjoram and aromatics

- 14 through the above-mentioned Ischurion 3,100
- 15 total silver 308
- 16 bronze 2 talents 1,410
- 17 which are in silver 22 total 330

For Heichelheim, Segrè, and Maresch these figures implied a value of 2,438 bronze drachms for the stater; the calculation assumes that the 22 silver drachms (5½ staters) of line 17 are equated to the 13,410 bronze drachms of line 16, yielding a silver : bronze ratio of 1:609½.⁴⁷ However, the account does not give a value for the stater, but instead calculates separate totals for silver and bronze currencies. The 308 silver drachms of line 15 with the 22 silver drachms of line 17 total 330 silver drachms as stated in line 17. Amounts in silver are not explicitly identified earlier in the account, but the figures in lines 1-8 are probably silver drachms. An amount in bronze drachms is explicitly identified in line 9 and the amounts in lines 10-14 should be understood as still in bronze, since they yield the total of 13,410 given in line 16.

P. Petr. II 39 D (= *P. Petr.* III 118) is a fragmentary account in both silver and bronze, not clearly related to other texts initially published as *P. Petr.* II 39. *P. Petr.* II 39 D was dated to the reign of Epiphanes or Philometor by Grenfell and Hunt, without explanation.⁴⁸ The mention of 6 silver drachms in line 5 narrows the date to the reign of Philometor c. 170 or afterward, for the reasons noted in connection with *P. Tebt.* III 2 1087. In this case the quantities of silver mentioned are smaller and do not necessarily point to a date close to 170.

- 1 εἰς κατα [- ca? -]
- 2 ἐν Σεβεννύτ[ωι - ca? -]
- 3 ὥστε ἐπίσκοπον [καὶ (?) - ca? -]
- 4 γραμματικὸν
- 5 γίνεται ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμὰς) ς [- ca? -]
- 6 χα(λκοῦ) φ
- 7 λοιπαὶ ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμαὶ) η (or κ)
- 8 ἀν() Βφ
- 9 χαλκοῦ (τάλαντ) [- ca? -]
- 10 (γίνεται) (τάλαντα) ζ κς

- 1 into...
- 2 in Sebennyto...
- 3 so that the supervisory official...

⁴⁷ Heichelheim (1930) 28; Segrè (1941) 183; Maresch (1996) 30, 195.

⁴⁸ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 586.

- 4 the scribal fee
- 5 total 6 silver drachms...
- 6 bronze 500
- 7 balance 8 (or 20) silver drachms
- 8 at the rate of (?) 2,500
- 9 bronze talents....
- 10 total 7 talents 26

The text continues but is too fragmentary to be useful. The alleged valuation of the stater occurs in lines 7-8. The edition of J.G. Smyly offers alternate readings for the balance in line 7, (δραχμαὶ) η (or κ). Grenfell and Hunt read 20 drachms rather than 8, whereas Reinach and Maresch both preferred (δραχμαὶ) η, but in any case all four saw a *timē* of the stater at the rate of 2,500 bronze drachms.⁴⁹ We cannot confirm this interpretation by following the calculations. The visible calculations suggest that the silver was not added to the bronze at the rate of 2,500 drachms per stater but was totaled separately: the 6 silver drachms of line 5 and the 20 of line 7 may account for the figure 26 at the end of line 10, i.e., the total in line 10 may be 7 talents in bronze and 26 drachms in silver, with the metals not stated explicitly. (*P. Tebt.* III 2 1087, discussed above, provides an unambiguous parallel.) If we are correct in suspecting that *P. Petr.* II 39D totals bronze and silver separately, we must also suspect that line 8 has been misinterpreted. Perhaps the abbreviation ἀν should not be completed as ἀν(α), but as ἀν(ήλωμα), expenditure, a term which appears in lines 5 and 8 of the roughly contemporary *P. Tebt.* III 2 1087.

O. Bodl. I 314 (Thebes? second century B.C.) explicitly values the stater at 2,200 bronze drachms.⁵⁰

- 1 ἔχομεν (τάλαντα) ς Δ
- 2 τούτων ἀργυρίου στατήρας ιζ
- 3 ἀνὰ Βσ (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) ς Αυ
- 4 ἀλλαγῆς χα(λκοῦ) (δραχμαὶ) Βυ
- 5 (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) ς Γυμ λο(ιπαὶ) φξ
- 1 We have 6 talents 4,000.
- 2 Of these, 17 silver staters
- 3 at the rate of 2,200 totaling 6 talents 1,400
- 4 with *allagê* (surcharge) of 2,400 bronze drachms
- 5 totaling 6 talents 3,440, balance 560.

⁴⁹ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 586; Reinach (1928) 174; Maresch (1996) 30, 195.

⁵⁰ This text is discussed by Burkhalter (2014) 580-581, and by Bresson (forthcoming), but with an emphasis on the imposition or rate of *allagê* rather than the valuation of the stater.

In this case the calculation confirms the value of the stater. The only problem is that the ostrakon cannot be dated more precisely. HGV and Trismegistos date it to the first half of the second century, citing *Berichtigungsliste* XI, p. 301, which notes the date proposed by Maresch.⁵¹ But DDbDP dates it 130-30, following Reekmans, who posited the highest *timai* of the stater for this period.⁵² Use of the preposition *ἀνα* to express the value of the stater has a possible early parallel in *P. Petr.* II 39 D, but that is now in question. This formula is otherwise unattested in early sources for the value of the stater, whereas it is common in the bank records from the time of Euergetes II and in texts of the late second and first centuries.

UPZ I 88 (Memphis, 161/0) is an account from the archive of Ptolemaios son of Glaukias, *katochos* in the Sarapieion of Memphis, pertaining to his business in textiles, in which his brother Apollonios acted as his agent.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 11 | Τοθῆτος ὀθονίου τιμὴν |
| 12 | (δραχμάς) Β Φαθρητί σινδόνα (δραχμῶν) Βρ |
| 13 | (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) Δρ ἄργυρίου (δραχμαὶ) η |
| 14 | (γίνεται) (τάλαντον) (δραχμαὶ) τ |
| 15 | Ἀπολλωνίωνι (δραχμάς) Βσ |
| 11 | price of linen from Totoes |
| 12 | 2,000 drachms a <i>sindeon</i> from Phathres 2,100 drachms |
| 13 | total 4,100 drachms 8 silver drachms |
| 14 | total a talent 300 drachms |
| 15 | for Apollonios 2,200 drachms |

The juxtaposition in line 13 of 4,100 (bronze) drachms and 8 silver drachms was interpreted as an equivalence by Grenfell and Hunt.⁵³ They expressed the equivalence as a silver to bronze ratio of 1:512½. The context of their discussion implies that this ratio is validated by similar ratios in the Tebtunis papyri, despite the large chronological gap between the account from the Sarapieion and those of *P. Tebt.* I which date from the reigns of Ptolemy Soter II, Ptolemy Alexander, and Ptolemy Neos Dionysos.⁵⁴ Most subsequent scholarship followed Grenfell and Hunt in citing this text as evidence for an equivalence of the silver drachm with

⁵¹ Maresch (1996) 30.

⁵² Reekmans (1951) 103, see *B.L.* III, p. 268.

⁵³ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 585-586.

⁵⁴ The dates of ratios from the Tebtunis papyri were specified by Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 580.

512½ bronze drachms or a *timê* of the stater of 2,050 bronze drachms.⁵⁵ But what actually happens in this account is that the 4,100 bronze drachms are added to the 8 silver drachms for the total of 6,300 bronze drachms given in line 14. The difference between 6,300 and 4,100 is the 2,200 drachms allocated to Apollonios in line 15. This must be the value of the 8 silver drachms, implying an equivalence of 1,100 bronze drachms per stater, as already concluded by A. Segrè and by F. Burkhalter and O. Picard.⁵⁶

Another papyrus from the archive of Ptolemaios, *UPZ* I 93 (Memphis, 17 July 159), preserves a complete letter from Apollonios to his brother that has been thought to give a rate derived from an actual currency exchange.

- 1 Ἀπολλώνιος Πτολεμαίωι [[.]] τῷ πατρει
- 2 χαίρην. τὸν λόγον τῶν χαλκῶν· ἀπέστη-
- 3 κα (δραχμάς) ἡ ἀργυρίου (δραχμῶν) Δσξ καὶ παρὰ σοῦ (δραχμάς)
- Α.
- 4 πέπρακα τὸ ὀθόνιον (δραχμῶν) ϕ καὶ τὸ εἰμάτιον (δραχμῶν) τπ
- 5 (γίνονται) (τάλαντον) α (δραχμαὶ) ρμ.
- 6 τούτων ἡγώρακα σίτου ἀρ(τάβας) β (δραχμῶν) χλ, Ἴππωνι (δραχ-
- μάς) Ατ
- 7 καὶ παρὰ Πετήσιος ἀρ(τάβας) ι χο(ίνικας) ι (δραχμῶν) Γοε
- 8 Σαραπίωνι (δραχμάς) ο, ἐρείου < (δραχμῶν) σ, ἄλλο < (δραχμῶν) σ,
- 9 καὶ παπύρους (δραχμῶν) ρμ, ἀνήλωμα (δραχμῶν) ρ,
- 10 τῇ ἐπητρία (δραχμάς) μ, τῷ γναφεῖ (δραχμάς) π
- 11 (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) Εωλε, (λοιπαὶ) (δραχμαὶ) ρνε. εὐτύχει.
- 12 (ἔτους) κβ Παῦνι ιθ. ἔρρωσαι;
- 13 (γίνονται) Γξε, (λοιπαὶ) (δραχμαὶ) Βσλε.

Apollonios to his father Ptolemaios, greeting. (I send) the account of the bronze (money). I withdrew on the 21st 8 drachms of silver 4,260 drachms and from you 1,000 drachms. I sold the linen for 500 drachms and the cloak for 380 drachms, total 1 talent 140 drachms. From this I purchased 2 artabas of grain for 630 drachms, to Hippon 1,300 drachms and from Petesis 10 artabas 10 choinikes for 3,075 drachms, to Sarapion 70 drachms, half a unit of wool at 200 drachms, another half at 200 drachms, and papyrus for 140 drachms, expense 100 drachms, to the weaver 40 drachms, to the fuller 80 drachms, total 5,835 drachms, balance 155 drachms. With good fortune. Year 22, 19 Pauni. Farewell. Total 3,905, balance 2,235 drachms.

⁵⁵ Wilcken (1927) 399; Reinach (1928) 174, 176; Heichelheim (1930) 29; Reekmans (1951) 115; Maresch (1996) 196.

⁵⁶ Segrè (1942) 181; Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 68.

Line 2 identifies this as an account in bronze.⁵⁷ The 8 silver drachms mentioned in line 3 play no part in the calculations. The prevailing interpretation, as with *UPZ* I 88, was proposed by Grenfell and Hunt, who suggested that the disappearance of the silver drachms from the account implies their conversion into bronze drachms.⁵⁸ They understood the juxtaposition of 8 silver drachms and 4,260 drachms in line 3 as an actual exchange implying a silver drachm valued 532½ bronze drachms (or a stater worth 2,130 bronze drachms) and they explicitly cited the (anachronistic) high ratios in the Tebtunis papyri to support their interpretation.⁵⁹ This understanding of the account has been endorsed by most subsequent scholars, including Wilcken, Reinach, Heichelheim, Reekmans, Maresch, and Agut.⁶⁰ A rare dissent was registered by Segrè, who expressed skepticism about such a high rate of exchange at this date and proposed a reading of 20 silver drachms instead of 8, yielding a ratio of 1:213 which would imply a value of 852 bronze drachms for the stater.⁶¹ In fact, the reading of 8 silver drachms can be confirmed from the plate in the facsimile edition of Letronne; η (8) and κ (20) are different in the hand of Apollonios.⁶² Another possible interpretation of the account is that Apollonios withdrew 2 silver staters and 4,260 bronze drachms from the clay vessel where he stored his cash,⁶³ in addition to the 1,000 bronze drachms he received from Ptolemaios, and took all this money on his buying trip but never had need to use the silver. This would be consistent with the view of E. Revillout that the two brothers carefully preserved their silver.⁶⁴ He believed that the 8 silver drachms of *UPZ* I 93 were the same coins as the 8 silver drachms of *UPZ* I 88. What is more, three years later, in *UPZ* I 101 (Memphis, 156), Ptolemaios left 8 silver drachms and some

⁵⁷ For parallels, see *SB* XVIII 14012 (origin unknown, after 6 March 101), l. 2, λόγος χα(λκοῦ); *PSI* I 64 (Oxyrrhynchus, Choiak of year 2, second to first century BC), l. 8, [ε(?)]ις ἀργυρίου λόγον; *P. Köln* XIII 524 (origin unknown, end of the second century), l. 10, εἰς ἀργυ() λόγον).

⁵⁸ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 585.

⁵⁹ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 586.

⁶⁰ Wilcken (1927) 413-414; Reinach (1928) 174, 176; Heichelheim (1930) 28, 29; Reekmans (1951) 115; Maresch (1996) 196; Agut (2011) 283. Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 68 observed that the word order in this passage suggests uncoined silver, in which case the value of coined silver should have been even higher.

⁶¹ Segrè (1942) 182.

⁶² I thank Willy Clarysse for this clarification.

⁶³ For the use of earthen jars to store money by denizens of the Sarapieion, see *UPZ* I 6 (Memphis, October 163), l. 20.

⁶⁴ Revillout (1885).

clothing as a pledge against a loan in bronze drachms. It seems plausible that these were still the same two silver staters and less likely that silver, always in the same amount, repeatedly came into the possession of Apollonios and/or Ptolemaios.

The possibility that *UPZ* I 93 does not provide a *timê* of 2,130 drachms becomes more compelling when we remember that in *UPZ* I 88, just one year earlier, the stater was valued at only 1,100 bronze drachms. In fact, Grenfell and Hunt were not entirely convinced of their own interpretations of documents earlier than the Tebtunis papyri: “since the possibility of a different explanation remains, we do not propose to lay much stress on these ... examples.”⁶⁵

A final early valuation of the stater was kindly brought to my attention by O. Picard. *P. Mich.* III 145, dated palaeographically by its editor to the early second century, is a mathematical text beginning with a table of fractions and continuing with various kinds of arithmetic “word problems” and instructions for their solution. Fragment III iii presents two problems in converting monetary sums in bronze to silver, and one in converting from silver to bronze. The first two problems:

- 1 χαλκοῦ (τάλαντα) μγ Β, ὥς τοῦ στατήρο(ς) ἐκ χαλκ[κ(οῦ)] Ασ·
- 2 ὥς δεῖ ἀγάλυσον τὰ (τάλαντα) μγ Β εἰς μυριάδος δρα-
- 3 χ[μῶν]· λ[άβ]ε τούτων τὸ Α'σ' | στατήρες σι[ς] β̄
- 4 τ[ούτους] τετράκις, ἐπὶ ὃ στατήρ ἔχει (δραχμάς) δ | (δραχμαὶ) ϖξς
(τετρώβολον).
- 5 χαλκοῦ (δραχμαὶ) Εω, ὥς τοῦ στατήρο(ς) ἐκ χαλκ(οῦ) Ασ·
- 6 ὥς δεῖ ἔλαβον τὸ Α'σ' τῶ[ν] π[ροκειμένων] (δραχμῶν) Εω | στατήρο(ς)
- 7 δ < γ'· τούτους τετράκις, ἐπὶ ὃ στατήρ ἔχει (δραχμάς) δ | (δραχμαὶ)
ιθ (δυώβολον).

43 talents 2,000 drachms of bronze, on the basis of 1 stater to 1,200 in bronze. As is necessary, reduce the 43 talents 2,000 into myriads of drachms. Take the 1,200th part of these = $216\frac{2}{3}$ staters. These times 4, since the stater contains 4 drachms = 866 drachms 4 obols.

5,800 drachms of bronze, on the basis of 1 stater to 1,200 in bronze. As is necessary, I took the 1,200th part of the given 5,800 drachms = $4\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{3}$ staters (i.e., $4\frac{5}{6}$ staters). These times 4, since the stater contains 4 drachms = 19 drachms 2 obols.

The third problem also stipulates a stater value of 1,200 bronze drachms for its solution. Presumably this conversion rate was the current value of the stater, and not merely a hypothetical figure like the others in the problems.

⁶⁵ Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 588.

The similarity of this rate to the valuation of the stater at 1,100 bronze drachms in *UPZ* I 88 invites the assumption that *P. Mich.* III 145 was roughly contemporary.

There are no further documents providing valuations of the stater until the bank records of the early 130s.

Several observations may now be offered about valuations of the stater during the first half of the second century. The term *timê* does not appear in the documents in connection with silver and the usage may be anachronistic for this period. There are very few securely dated documents mentioning silver staters or silver drachms, and not surprisingly most of these are datable to the reign of Ptolemy VI, when the long period of silver scarcity began to be reversed.⁶⁶ Of these few documents, only three unambiguously record a value of coined silver in terms of the bronze standard (see Table 1).

Taken at face value, these three documents reveal an approximate doubling in the value of the stater between 171 and 161/0. As indicated earlier, however, there is reason to be cautious about *P. Tor. Amenother* 1. It lacks confirmation from contemporary Greek documents. Those closest in date, *P. Mich.* III 173 (170) and *P. Tebt.* III 2 1087 (c. 170), respectively, attest the use of coined silver as part of a pledge and the separate addition of amounts in silver and bronze. In *P. Petr.* II 39D, almost certainly later than 170, the two metals were again perhaps added separately. It would be prudent to regard the value of the stater in *P. Tor. Amenother* 1 as something negotiated by the contracting parties in order to determine a total value for the goods of the bride. We cannot be confident that it reflects an official rate or even a widely shared assumption about the value of the stater.

Overall, the documents examined above give the impression of a disordered monetary situation in the first four decades of the second century. The tendency to use silver staters as pledges or deposits, rather than spending them, is attested by five documents — *SB* XXII 15326, *P. Iand.* VIII 146, *P. Mich.* III 173, *P. Tebt.* III 2 891, and *UPZ* I 101 — and the staters mentioned in *UPZ* I 88 and 93 were also not spent. This reluctance to treat silver as regular money may be an expression of

⁶⁶ The scarcity of coined silver in Egypt is confirmed by the hoard record, see Lorber (2013) 136-138, 148-151.

Gresham's Law, which states that inferior coinage drives the better coinage out of circulation. It seems that after the accounting reform of the late third century the bronze and silver coinages scarcely functioned as a single interchangeable monetary system. Sometimes they were treated as parallel currencies and calculated separately, but more usually only the bronze coinage functioned as money.

The lack of specific valuations or conversions before 171 (or perhaps better, 161/0) presents a challenge to those who have insisted that silver was always the metal of reference in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁶⁷ This lack suggests the *timê* of the stater was not an inherent and essential element of the bronze standard from its introduction, when value definitions should in theory have been most needful, but rather an adaptation that emerged after roughly half a century. If we can assume that the school exercises relied on an official conversion rate, it would appear that eventually the state provided guidance as to the relation of the two currencies.

These impressions gained from the study of accounts are consistent with information about actual exchange facilities. Under the reign of Ptolemy V, the monopoly on exchange (*kollybos*) was contracted to goldsmiths.⁶⁸ In the Arsinoite nome, the *kollybos* and the *chrysochoïke* were farmed together, and in the Oxyrrhynchite nome the *kollybos* was associated with the *asêmônia*, apparently a tax on uncoined bullion.⁶⁹ The reason for these pairings was likely that the potential profit from monetary exchange was too paltry to attract bids on its own. The substitution of goldsmiths for bankers reinforces the sense that coined silver was conceived more as bullion than as currency. The institution of the exchange bank, last attested in 243,⁷⁰ was revived under Ptolemy Philometor. *O. Bodl.* I 50 (Thebes, 159/8) is a receipt for the payment of the exchange monopoly for year 23. It is probably no coincidence that the first securely dated valuation of the stater is very close in time to our first evidence for the revival of the *kollybou trapeza*.

⁶⁷ Le Rider in Cadell & Le Rider (1997) 90-91; Le Rider & Callataÿ (2006) 197-198; Gorre (2012) 113-115.

⁶⁸ See Burkhalter (2014) 578-579; ead. (forthcoming).

⁶⁹ *P. Mich.* XVIII, 771 (Arsinoites, 195) and 774 (Arsinoites, 194); *BGU* VI 1242 (Oxyrrhynchus, 193).

⁷⁰ Bogaert (1984); von Reden (2007) 253-254 with n. 7. The latest reference to a monopoly bank is in *P. Lond.* VII 2013.

TIMAI OF THE STATER IN THE LATE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD (AFTER C. 115)

In the dossier of late Ptolemaic documents providing *timai* of the stater only a minority have explicit and unambiguous dates. Numismatic criteria can be invoked to establish more reliable dates for a number of texts, bringing us closer to the possibility of detecting an evolutionary pattern in the value of the stater.

Among the earliest documents are four accounts of expenditures during the land survey at Kerkeosiris, from the archive of the village scribe Menches.⁷¹ Two of them, *P. Tebt.* I 113 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1154 (Kerkeosiris, March 113) and *P. Tebt.* I 112 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1151 (Kerkeosiris, 22 February–24 March 112) are reliably dated by regnal years, months, and days included in the accounts. The other documents are closely related by subject matter and by the officials mentioned, but not explicitly dated. Their editor, A. Verhoogt, proposed dates based on the assumption that the *timê* of the stater rose steadily in this period.⁷² A more reliable criterion is the presence of numerous small expenditures in the amount of 5 drachms. Papyrologists have long recognized the importance of this figure: amounts smaller than 5 drachms rarely appear in accounts of the second and first centuries, and accordingly a succession of scholars have submitted that a pentadrachm was the smallest denomination of the currency system.⁷³ Grenfell and Hunt were careful to stipulate that the papyrological attestations implying a 5-drachm coin belong to the late Ptolemaic period, and Reinach dated the pentadrachm after c. 116.⁷⁴ The pentadrachm is also mentioned by Hiero of Alexandria and an actual pentadrachm coin has been convincingly identified by O. Picard.⁷⁵ In the current classification of Ptolemaic bronze coinage, it is included in Series 9, meaning that it could have been introduced as early as 113/2,

⁷¹ Verhoogt (2005).

⁷² Verhoogt (2005) 14, and cf. p. 151 and 165.

⁷³ The pentadrachm was characterized as the smallest bronze coin of the late Ptolemaic period or of the second century by Grenfell & Hunt (1902) 593-594; Milne (1925) 274; Reinach (1928) 171; Gara (1984) 119, 122; Maresch (1996) 96-97; Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 61-62; Picard (2005) 85-86; Picard (2008); Picard & Faucher (2012) 62.

⁷⁴ In contrast, Maresch (1996) 96 claimed that the pentadrachm is common in accounts from c. 130/127, but the only example cited is *P. Tebt.* I 112, dated 112. Picard & Faucher (2012) 67 repeated the claim that the pentadrachm is commonly attested from c. 130, but without citing any text.

⁷⁵ Picard (2005; 2008). Although Picard associated this pentadrachm with the coinage of Cleopatra VII, Hoover (2008) demonstrated that it was already in use at the time of the War of Scepters (103-101).

after the two years devoted to the production of the explicitly dated Series 8 (which does not include a small coin that might be identified as a pentadrachm).⁷⁶ Expenditures of 5 drachms appear frequently in *P. Tebt.* I 112, and most other expenditures are multiples of 5 drachms, proving that Series 9 was in fact introduced in the fifth regnal year of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX. Expenditures of 5 drachms are also common in *P. Tebt.* I 185 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1152 and *P. Tebt.* I 213 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1153, meaning that neither can be dated earlier than 113/2.⁷⁷ *P. Köln* XIII 522, an account of a religious association, is another text that can be dated from this criterion. Its editor, K. Maresch, cited comparable accounts dating from c. 114 to c. 112/1.⁷⁸ The monthly dues of the members are 325 drachms for an unnamed month, resulting in a total of 1 talent 1,475 drachms, and 515 drachms for Phaophi, resulting in a total of 1 talent 3,785 drachms. These amounts reflect the use of pentadrachms and require us to date the document no earlier than 113/2. The mention of Phaophi, second month of the Egyptian year, allows for a date in October of 113 but a later year is not excluded.

Monetary sums in silver drachms that are not multiples of four can be used to narrow the dates of other documents. Silver coins smaller than a tetradrachm were produced only exceptionally in Egypt, and their extreme rarity today suggests that such emissions were not only infrequent but limited in size. Didrachms were struck only once in the late Ptolemaic period, by Ptolemy IX in 114/3 (Svoronos 1664). Drachms were struck on only five occasions after the reign of Ptolemy II: by Ptolemy IX in 115/4, when they were accompanied by triobols (Svoronos 1661-1662); by Ptolemy X in 93/2 (Svoronos 1683); by Ptolemy XII in 54/3 (Svoronos 1838); and by Cleopatra VII in 47/6 and 42/1 (Svoronos 1853; *Boston* 2303). An *ephodion* (travel allowance) of six silver drachms is mentioned in the introduction to *P. Tebt.* I 253, dated to year 19 of an unnamed ruler, thus 96 or 63. The earlier date appears more probable than 63, which was a decade before Ptolemy XII struck his only issue of drachms. By 63 the silver didrachms, drachms, and triobols of Ptolemy IX should largely have

⁷⁶ For the series classification of Ptolemaic bronze coinage, see Picard & Faucher (2012). The dates and other characteristics of Series 8 and Series 9 are discussed on p. 88-89 and 90-92. The regnal attribution of Series 8 was established by Faucher & Shahin (2006) 137, 148-151. Its dates of year 3 and 4 refer to the regnal years of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, equivalent to 115/4 and 114/3.

⁷⁷ Verhoogt's dates are before March 113? and February/March 113, respectively. In his appendix Maresch (1996) 196 lists *P. Tebt.* I 185 with a date of c. 112.

⁷⁸ Maresch, in Gronewald e.a. (2013) 91.

disappeared from circulation over the course of half a century, and the drachms of Ptolemy X were already thirty years in the past. Admittedly, in 96 the small silver denominations of Ptolemy IX were not recent issues, having been struck 18 to 19 years earlier; but still a date of 96 appears preferable to 63 for *P. Tebt.* I 253.

P. Tebt. I 121 presents a similar case. It is dated year 21 of an unnamed ruler, thus 94 or 61. Once again an *ephodion* of 6 silver drachms is mentioned in l. 39. According to the reasoning described above, the account is more likely to have been written in 94 than in 61. The same dating applies to *P. Tebt.* I 103 and *P. Tebt.* I 189, which were shown by F.A.J. Hoogendijk to be closely related to *P. Tebt.* I 121.⁷⁹ There is a small historical gain from redating these texts. They are the earliest documents to mention the *laographia* (tax registration). The original editors, Grenfell, Hunt, and Smyly, followed by Hoogendijk, favored the lower date in the reign of Ptolemy XII.⁸⁰ We can narrow the possible dates of yet another document. *SB XVII* 14012 is dated to year 16 of an unknown ruler, after 6 March 101. The possible attributions are to Ptolemy X in 99/8, to Ptolemy XII in 66/5, or to Cleopatra VII in 37/5. The mention of 26 silver drachms in line 6 tends to rule out an attribution to Ptolemy XII, without allowing us to choose between the remaining alternatives.

Two of the *timai* of the late Ptolemaic period are exceptionally low in comparison to the others, 1,340 bronze drachms in *BGU VIII* 1885 and 1,350 bronze drachms in *P. Oxy.* IV 784.⁸¹ A monetary figure in the first of these texts allows it to be dated more narrowly than 64–44 as proposed by HGV or the first century as proposed by Maresch.⁸² The mention of 3 drachms — by implication, of silver since it is followed by χα(λκοῦ) (δραχμαί) Αε — implies the existence of silver one-drachm coins. Only the drachms of Cleopatra VII postdated the first severe debasement of the coinage in 53/2.⁸³ The exceptionally low *timê* of the silver could be a

⁷⁹ Hoogendijk (2010).

⁸⁰ Hoogendijk (2010) 313.

⁸¹ This text was dated to the first century by its first editors, B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, but without explanation. Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 68 preferred to assume a relatively early date because of its low *timê*, and they placed it in their list between *UPZ* I 88 (161/0) and *UPZ* I 93 (159). Apparently they believed that these three documents illustrated a steady rise in the *timê* of the stater.

⁸² Maresch (1996) 198.

⁸³ Older literature is full of erroneous assumptions about the debasement of Ptolemaic silver coinage. The date and severity of the first important debasement were established by a review of several sets of metallurgical analyses, see Hazzard (1990).

response to the debasement, in which case *BGU* VIII 1885 should be dated after Cleopatra's first issue of drachms in 47/6. *P. Oxy.* IV 784, with its similar *timê*, should probably also be dated after the debasement, i.e., after 53/2. A more specific date for *P. Oxy.* IV 784 may be suggested by the unusually high wheat price of 2,200 drachms per artaba, by far the highest of the first century. This price would be consistent with an attribution to the reign of Cleopatra VII around her third regnal year, when a poor inundation caused famine throughout Egypt and the rulers issued a prostagma requiring that all grain and legumes purchased in Middle or Upper Egypt be transported to Alexandria on pain of death.⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that *BGU* VIII 1885 and *P. Oxy.* IV 784 are both private accounts, whereas a document emanating from the Ptolemaic bureaucracy in 51 (*BGU* VIII 1827) still maintains a *timê* typical of the preceding period, 1,950 bronze drachms. This is proof that Ptolemy XII officially valued his debased tetradrachms at the same rate as his older coinage of good silver.

With several of the ambiguous dates cleared up, some patterns emerge in the valuations of the stater. The majority of the *timai* are in the range of 1,800 to 1,980 bronze drachms.⁸⁵ Lower values seem to be concentrated in particular documents or periods. All *timai* of 1,500 drachms occur in a single document, *P. Tebt.* I 185 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1153, an official account datable no earlier than February 112. The only two *timai* of 1,500+ drachms are in a private account, *PSI Cong.* XVII 22, dated to year 3 of an uncertain ruler, thus 114 or 78. The similarity of its *timai* to those of *P. Tebt.* I 185 and the absence of comparable figures in other documents of the late Ptolemaic period may favor a date of 114 for *PSI Cong.* XVII 22.

All but one of the nine *timai* of 1,600 drachms are found in a single document, *P. Tebt.* I 121, which as argued above should probably be dated to 94. Another *timê* of 1,600 drachms is found in *P. Tebt.* I 189, which continues the account of *P. Tebt.* I 121, as demonstrated by Hoogendijk.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *BGU* VIII 1730 = *SP* II 209 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 73 (Herakleopolites, 27 October 50). On the hydrological problems, see *BGU* VIII 1843 (Herakleopolites, 50/49).

⁸⁵ *BGU* VI 1235 (17 August 75 or 10 August 46) appears in earlier lists of documents attesting *timai* of the stater. Even though the inferred value of the stater, 1,800 bronze drachms, is entirely consistent with other records of the period, it is excluded here because the actual wording χα(λκοῦ) ρυπαροῦ (τάλαντα) δέκα δύο καὶ (δραχμῶς) ρξ (γίνονται) τά(λαντα) ιβ (δραχμαὶ(?)) ρξ does not specify silver and is most naturally read as 12 T 160 dr. in bronze.

⁸⁶ Hoogendijk (2010) 313. Following the original editors, Hoogendijk preferred the date of 61.

Together these two texts also account for three of the five *timai* of 1,600+ drachms; the remaining two are in *P. Tebt.* I 139 (early first century) and *P. Tebt.* I 256 (c. 112). Another *timê* in this range occurs in *P. Tebt.* I 213 = *P. Tebt.* IV 1153 (March 112 or later); this, together with *P. Tebt.* I 256, belongs to the archive of the village scribes of Kerkeosiris. It thus seems that we have two clusters, a small one in the archive of the village scribes of Kerkeosiris, perhaps to be associated with other low rates attested around 112, and a larger one that includes most *timai* of 1,600 and 1,600+ drachms and can probably be assigned to the year 94/3. The latter cluster represents a reduction from the rates that prevailed from 111 to 96. Due to a gap in the records we do not know how long this reduced rate was in effect. The next securely dated references to *timai* of the stater, in *BGU* VI 1292, inform us that in 83/2 the high *timai* typical of the late Ptolemaic period were again in effect.

We should consider the possibility that the *timai* of 1,600–1,650 drachms in 94/3 were not a chronological anomaly and reflect a special, preferential rate. These low *timai* come from the account of a tax farmer and from a related list of taxes. Perhaps the lower rates were a concession to ease the tax farmers' burden of converting taxes collected in bronze into silver for payment into the treasury. Two observations may support this hypothesis. The first is that *P. Tebt.* I 120, a tax farmer's account perhaps from the preceding year, attests *timai* of the stater in the usual range (1,800 to 1,980 bronze drachms, but preponderantly 1,950 bronze drachms), and in line 115 it also attests a charge of 300 silver drachms for the conversion of the tax payments from bronze to silver.⁸⁷ The second is that in *P. Tebt.* I 121, the tax farmer's account from Theogonis which is the source of almost all *timai* of 1,600 bronze drachms, a calculation can be made suggesting a much higher valuation of the stater. In lines 21-40 we observe total expenditure of 1 T 1,120 drachms, of which the total in bronze is 4,230 drachms. This leaves 2,890 bronze drachms unaccounted for; presumably they represent the value of the *ephodion* of six silver drachms in line 39. This yields a monetary ratio of $481\frac{2}{3}:1$ implying a value of $1,926\frac{2}{3}$ drachms for the stater. A concession concerning the value of the stater might have been general but temporary, or a standard rate for tax farmers, or accorded to particular farmers to ensure that their contract proved profitable.

⁸⁷ *P. Tebt.* I, p. 501.

A *timê* of 2,000 drachms appears infrequently in the late Ptolemaic period. Usually cited as an example is *P. Tebt.* I 35 (111), an official letter regulating the maximum price of a mina of myrrh, a royal monopoly, in both silver and bronze currency.⁸⁸ Modern scholars infer that the two prices, 40 silver drachms and 3 talents 2,000 in bronze, indicate the official equivalence of the silver stater to 2,000 bronze drachms.⁸⁹ But the document does not provide an explicit equivalence in the context of an account, and it is possible that the price in bronze was set higher than the silver price in order to encourage payment in silver.⁹⁰ The other three *timai* of 2,000 drachms occur in private documents and in these cases it seems likely that the value of the stater was negotiated between the contracting parties.

A last document requiring comment is *SB* XIV 11515, whose *timê* of 2,750 is the highest on record. In republishing this text W. Clarysse found himself unable to narrow the broad date of second-first century proposed in the *editio princeps*.⁹¹ He noted Maresch's belief that high *timai* were characteristic of the early second century. But he also observed that the name Ision, which appears in column one of the ostrakon, is otherwise unattested before the Roman period. Considering that we could not verify unassailable high *timai* in the early second century, there is no obstacle to dating the ostrakon on the basis of onomastics. The most satisfying explanation for the extremely high *timê* is to assume that the ostrakon belongs near the end of the Ptolemaic period, after the debasement of 53/2 and perhaps even later, when most silver coinage of good quality had been recalled by the government or had disappeared into hoards. Under these circumstances, the scarce tetradrachms of good silver should certainly have been valued more highly in private accounts than coins that had been severely adulterated.

CONCLUSIONS

Our critical review of the documents supports the common view that the value of the stater was at its lowest in the early second century and increased as the century advanced, but with very important caveats. For

⁸⁸ For English translations, see *SP* II, no. 223 or Bagnall & Derow (2004) no. 117.

⁸⁹ *SP* II, p. 113 n. c; Reinach (1928) 176; Reekmans (1951) 111; Hazzard (1995) 86; Maresch (1996) 196; Cavagna (2010) 211.

⁹⁰ Bagnall & Derow (2004) 197 and 198 suggested that the whole episode may have been an abnormal forced sale, perhaps necessitated by an inability of the regular retailers to sell the myrrh.

⁹¹ Clarysse (2013) 244.

more than thirty years after the accounting reform of the late third century, there are no valuations of the stater in terms of bronze drachms. Nearly half a century elapsed before the first valuation of the stater that seems likely to reflect an official exchange ratio. Transactions of the early decades of the second century indicate that silver coinage was often not treated as regular money, and accounting practices of this period suggest that bronze and silver coinage were not normally considered as interchangeable. Either the relation of bronze and silver was not clearly defined in the accounting reform of the late third century, or the relation was not widely publicized or insisted upon by the state. Something changed c. 160. We may suspect that a clear definition or redefinition of the silver : bronze ratio and a revival of the *kollubou trapeza* were among the reforms promulgated by Ptolemy VI in 163, when he began his second sole reign in Egypt.

The pattern of increase in the value of the stater may be expressed either in drachms per stater or as a silver : bronze ratio, as is preferred in the earlier scholarship. The figures for c. 138-136 and for the late Ptolemaic period after 115 are averages.

DATE	DRACHMS PER STATER	SILVER : BRONZE RATIO
171	500	1:125
163? / 161/0	1,200 / 1,100	1:300 / 1:275
c. 138-136	c. 1,600	1:400
After 115	1,800 - 1,900	1:450

If we exclude the somewhat questionable figure from *P. Tor. Amenotheres* 1, the rate of increase over the half century after 160 is not so very steep. There is no dramatic leap by a factor of six or more, as in the models of Reinach, Heichelheim, and Segrè. The value does not double even once, to say nothing of the three doublings posited by Reekmans.

The misinterpretation of *UPZ* I 88 and 93 by Grenfell and Hunt exaggerated the rapidity and the severity of the stater's increase in value. This led to a distorted understanding of the Egyptian economy in the early second century and inspired negative judgments of Ptolemaic policy in the works of influential scholars like M. Rostovtzeff, C. Préaux, and T. Reekmans. The scholarly consensus that Ptolemaic Egypt was overwhelmed with severe economic problems in the second century is ripe for reconsideration, just as historians are now questioning the narrative of a Ptolemaic

kingdom in decline for two thirds of its history.⁹² The models of stepwise inflation in the second and first centuries BC also require reexamination. New price data are available, including new wheat values from second-century Egypt and Babylonian commodity prices recorded in the *Astronomical Diaries*, which may help to assess the degree to which such prices were influenced by monetary ratios. The models should also be tested against current understanding of second-century Ptolemaic bronze coinage. Broader scholarship on the role of coinage in ancient economies may bring other essential insights.

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TABLE 1. Early Valuations of the Stater

DOCUMENT	DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	VALUE
<i>SB</i> XXII 15326	Late third–early second cent.	Pawnbroker’s loan against a pledged stater	> 80
<i>P. Tor. Amenotes</i> 1 Thebes	171	Stater in goods of bride valued at 25 <i>deben</i>	500
<i>UPZ</i> I 88 Memphis	161/0	Private account of clothing transactions	1,100
<i>P. Mich.</i> III 145	Early second cent.	School exercise	1,200

TABLE 2. *Timai* of the Stater under Euergetes II (mainly bank records)

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Herakl. Bank</i> Herakleopolites, c. 138–136	Disbursement	1b, ll. 2–2a: (τάλ.) θ υ αῖ ἄργυ() ρυ	1,544
	Disbursement	1b, l. 11: ἄργυ() ιβ Δψο	1,590
	Disbursement	1b, l. 12: τι(μῆς) ἄρ[γ]υ() λβ (τάλ.) β Αυ	1,630

⁹² Vantorpe (2013); Fischer-Bovet (2016).

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
	Disbursement	1c, l. 15: ἀργυ() δ Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	1e, col. II, l. 4: ἀργυ() η Γσ	1,600
	Disbursement	1e, col. II, l. 5: ἀργυ() κ (τάλ.) α Βρν	1,630
	Deposit	2a, col. IV, l. 5: ἀργυ(ρ) κ (τάλ.) α Αη	1,580
	Disbursement	2a, col. IV, l. 9: ἀργυ() ρλβ ἀνὰ Αχκ	1,620
	Disbursement	2b, col. II, l. 3: μισ(θοῦ?) ἀργυ() ιβ Δακ	1,640
	Disbursement	2c, col. I, l. 10: ἀργυ() ηνι..... Γσξ	1,630
	Disbursement	2f, col. II, ll. 6-6a: (τάλ.) β Δυ ἀργυ() μ	1,640
	Disbursement	2f, col. II, ll. 9-9a: (τάλ.) α φξ ας	1,640
	Disbursement	2g, col. II, ll. 13-13a: (τάλ.) κ Βν[ἀργυ() τ	1,627.33
	Deposit	5a, col. II, ll. 1-2: ἀγορας... ἀργυ(ρ)) δ Αρ[. . .] . . . () Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 3: δ . . . εϛ[. . .] . . . βα() Αφπ	1,580
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 4: η [. . .] . υ () Γσ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 5: δ [. . .] . . . νχις κα() Αφπ	1,580
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 6: δ ρυ() Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 7: δ Ἀγ[τί]πατρος Ἡρακλ() Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 8: δ [. . .] . . . () Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 9: δ [. . .] τοη . . Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 10: δ [. . .] . η() Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 11: η Α . . . χις Γρπ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 12: δ ις Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 13: ιβ traces Δψο	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 14: δ Ἀσφεύς Αφκ	1,520

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 15: δ Α . η () Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 16: δ Ἀπολλων () ἄντι(γρ.) πα () Ἄνυ () Αφκ	1,520
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 17: Ἀρποκράς Αφρ	1,590
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 20: δ Ἡρακλεώτου Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 21: κ Ἄντ . () λει(τ.) Ἐξα () (τάλ.) α Β	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 22: δ [Α]σκλη(άπων) χει(ρ) Αχ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. II, l. 23: η Χ . βης μαστιοφόρος Γσ	1,600
	Deposit	5a, col. III, l. 1: κη Σισίνης (τάλ.) ιβ Βψπ	1,590
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, ll. 3-4: πρῶσις ἀργυ () λδ Κάσσανδρος (τάλ.) β Α	c. 1,530
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 5: η Μέλαγος ὕπη () Γσμ	1,620
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 6: δ Ἀνδρῶν(ικ) Αχλ	1,630
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 7: ιβ Τροθητι Δωξ	1,620
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 8: ις [] . . . ης (τάλ.) α φκ	1,630
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 9: κδ . . . () . . . χυ . . . () (τάλ.) α Γφμ	1,590
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 10: ιβ Ἀγησίλαος Δω	1,600
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 11: δ Βαβῦνχίς Αχλ	1,630
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 12: ις Νικάνδρφ Σαρα () (τάλ.) α υ	1,600 ⁹³
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 13: [κη Σισίνης (τάλ.) α Ερ]	c. 1,586
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 14: ιβ . . . λειλι () καθα(ρ.) Δωφ	1,630

⁹³ Maresch (2012) 73 gives the *timē* doubtfully as 1,620 on the basis of a restored [π] at the end of the figure.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 15: δ Πανσανίας Αχλ	1,630
	Disbursement	5a, col. IV, l. 16: ξ Εδβίωι Ἡροδο() (τάλ.) δ τ	1,620
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 5: δ Πτο(λ.) φ. [] Αχλ	1,630
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 6: δ Σ. . η() . [] Αχλ	1,630
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 10: κ [] (τάλ.) α Βρ	1,620
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 11: η [] Γσμ	1,620
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 12: ιβ [] Δωξ	1,620
	Disbursement	5b, col. I, l. 13: ις [] . . . (τάλ.) α φκ	1,630
	Deposit	5e, col. I: Αχ (appearing three times according to Maresch)	1,600
	Deposit	6a, ll. 2-3: ἀγό(ρασ)ις ἀργυ(ρίου) δ Θέωνι γρ() ἀγορα() Αχκ	1,620
	Deposit	6a, l. 4: κη Ἀλε(ξ.) . (τάλ.) α Ετμ	1,620
	Deposit	6a, l. 5: δ Ἡρω(δ.) Αχκ	1,620
	Deposit	6a, l. 6: δ Θε() Ξε(ν.) Αχκ	1,620
	Deposit	6a, l. 7: δ Ι. . [. .] ε() Αχκ	1,620
<i>P. Tebt.</i> III 2 890 Herakleopolites, prob. Euergetes II	Disbursement	l. 12: στα(τήρας) κε ἀν(ά) Αχ τά(λαντα) ς Δ	1,600
	Deposit	l. 14: στα(τήρων) γ Δφλ δ ἀν(ά) Αφπ α τκ	1,510 1,580
	Disbursement	l. 29: στα(τήρων) ι ἀν(ά) Αχ τά(λαντα) β [Δ]	1,600
	Disbursement	l. 86: λβ ἀ(ν)ά Αχ τά(λαντα) η Γσ	1,600
	Disbursement	l. 87: [ἀ]ν(ά) Αφ Δφ καὶ στα(τήρων) β Γ	1,500
	Deposit	l. 166: [. . .] στα(τήρων) γ ἀ(ν)ά Αφπ Δψμ	1,580
	Deposit	l. 229: Δχπ τι(μῆς) στα(τήρων) γ	1,560

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Rein.</i> II 109 Origin unknown, 23 Apr.–22 May 131	Account of pay of agricultural workers	l. 9: [ὁ λόγος] ἀπὸ (τάλαντων) γ Γ ἀργ(υρί)ου ις (τάλαντον) α φξ	1,640

TABLE 3: *Timai* of the Stater in the Late Ptolemaic Period

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>PSI</i> I 64 Oxyrrhynchus, yr 2, Choiak = December 116 or 80	Promissory note	l. 7-9: [] εριη[.] χρυ]σίου τετάρτας δεκαῆξ χαλκοῦ [τ]άλαντ[.] ις ἀργυρίου λόγον δραχμᾶς τριάκοντα ἕξ ἐν χα[λκοῦ τάλαντοις] τρισὶ	2,000
<i>O. Wilck.</i> II 1496 Thebes, 17 May 115	Bank receipt for tax payment	l. 5: τιμὴν ἀργυρίου δραχμᾶς μ / (τάλαντα) τρία (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) γ Εἰρη(ναῖος) τρα(πεζίτης) (τάλαντα) γ Β (i.e., the banker adds a surcharge of 2,000)	1,800
<i>PSI Congr.</i> XVII 22 19 Jan. 114 or 10 Jan. 78	Private account	l. 20: καὶ ἔχει Μέλας ἀπὸ τούτων Δωροθέωι εἰς τιμὴν ἀργυ(ρίου) (δρ.) μ (τάλ.) β Γχ	1,560
		l. 21: καὶ Πετοσίρις ὀνηλάτης ὁμοίως στατῆ(ρας) γ Δχπ	1,560
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 113 = <i>P. Tebt.</i> IV 1154 Kerkeosiris, March 113 ⁹⁴	Official account of village scribe (disbursement)	l. 13-14: ἐν Κροκο(δείλων) πό(λει) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) η Γφ δι' Ὁρου τοῦ ἀδελ(φοῦ) η Γφ	1,750
<i>P. Köln</i> XIII 522 October 113 or later ⁹⁵	Account of religious association (expenditure)	Recto, l. 10: αἱ δὲ δ Αω	1,800

⁹⁴ This text is explicitly dated year 4 and mentions payments distributed on Mecheir 25. The date of March 113 follows Verhoogt (2005) 189. In his appendix Maresch (1996) 196, lists this papyrus with a date of 115/4.

⁹⁵ Maresch in Gronewald e.a. (2013) 91 observed that this account includes no figures less than 10 drachms and submitted that this is evidence for a date after the middle of the second century. He cited comparable texts dated between c. 114 and c. 112/1. In fact,

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 185 = <i>P. Tebt.</i> IV 1152 Kerkeosiris, Feb. 112 or slightly later ⁹⁶	Official account of village scribe (income?)	l. 7: ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ Αφ	1,500
	(income)	l. 14-15: παρὰ Θέωνος ἀπὸ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) λς, ιβ ἐπὶ χαλκοῦ ἀν(ὰ) Α[φ] Δφ	1,500
	(expenditure)	l. 21: ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ Αφ	1,500
	(disbursement)	Frag. B, l. 5-7: Θέωνι θυρωρῶι λογι(στηρίου) ὑπὲρ Μ[άρ]ωνος ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκει(μένου) λόγου ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) δ ἐν Αφ χα(λκοῦ)	1,500
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 112 = <i>P. Tebt.</i> IV 1151 Kerkeosiris, 22 Feb.–24 Mar. 112 ⁹⁷	Official account of village scribe (disbursement)	l. 105: τῇ γυ(ναικὶ) εἰς συ(μ) πλ(ήρωσιν) τι(μῆς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ ψν	?
	(income)	l. 110-111: πραγματείας (ἐπαρουργικοῦ) κλή(ρου) ἀπὸ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) κ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμᾶς) ιβ καὶ εἰς τι(μῆν) ἄλλω(ν) [η] Γω	1,900
	(expenditure)	l. 121: τι(μῆς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ Α ρν	1,950

monetary amounts ending in 5 and therefore requiring the existence of pentadrachms occur five times in this short text, notably in the monthly assessment for each member of the religious association, including the assessment for the month of Phaophi. A date in or after the introduction of Series 9 in 113/2 is indicated.

⁹⁶ Verhoogt (2005) 151 dates these three fragments before March 113. They evidently concern the crop survey, and the officials named are the same as those in *P. Tebt.* I 112, securely dated to February–March 112. Verhoogt assigned an earlier date on the basis of his assumption that the *time* of the stater rose steadily. He also cited the fact that Akousilaos, village scribe of Apollon polis in *P. Tebt.* I 213 and *P. Tebt.* I 113, is described in *P. Tebt.* I 185 as taking care of the office of village scribe. Expenditures in the amount of 5 drachms are numerous in *P. Tebt.* I 185, and these imply a date after the introduction of Series 9 in 113/2. Because both accounts concern crop surveys, *P. Tebt.* I 185 must be dated at least a year later than *P. Tebt.* 113 (dated year 4), despite the inconsistency regarding Akousilaos. In his appendix Maresch (1996) 196 lists *P. Tebt.* I 185 with a date of c. 112.

⁹⁷ This text is securely dated by its explicit reference to year 5, Mecheir 6, with nearly daily entries until Phamenoth 6.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 213 = <i>P. Tebt.</i> IV 1153 Kerkeosiris, Mar. 112 or later ⁹⁸	Official account of village scribe (withdrawal)	l. 45: ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμ.) δ χα(λκοῦ) Αχ[1,6xx
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 256 descr. c. 112	Official account of village scribe	12 silver drachms correspond to 4,920 bronze drachms	1,640
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 35 111	Official letter regulating price of myrrh	ll. 5, 17: ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) μ, ἐν χα(λκῶι) (ταλάντων) γ Β	2,000
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 179 descr. Perhaps Kerkeosiris, late second cent.	Account, perhaps of village scribe	κοίτης ἀρχιφυ(λακίτου) ἀργυ(ρίου) κ (τάλαντων) α Γ ς	1,980
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 116 Kerkeosiris, c. 105-99	Official account of village scribe (transaction with money changer)	l. 4: Κῶτι τι(μῆς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμ.) δ Αωμ	1,840
	(transaction with money changer)	ll. 20-21: καὶ παρὰ Κῶτος μεταβόλου [-ca.?-] ὁ ἔσχηκε τι(μῆς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ [Αωμ]	1,840
	(transaction with money changer)	l. 50: Κῶ(τι) μετα(βόλῳι) τι(μῆς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) δ Αωμ	1,840
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 184 descr. (late second cent.)		12 silver drachms equated to 5,400 bronze drachms	1,800
<i>P. Köln</i> XIII 524 114/3 or after ⁹⁹	Private account of soldier or official (expenditure)	l. 4: σοὶ (δραχμ.) δ Α ς	1,900

⁹⁸ Verhoogt (2005) 165 dated this severely damaged account February/March 113, with reservations. Again it concerns the crop survey, and again the officials named also appear in *P. Tebt.* I 112, securely dated to February-March 112. Verhoogt assigned an earlier date on the basis of his assumption that the *timê* of the stater rose steadily. Expenditures in the amount of 5 drachms are numerous, and these imply a date after the introduction of Series 9 in 113/2. The account covers the 15th through 23rd day of an unnamed month, which Verhoogt assumed to be Mecheir. Possibly these dates fell in the month of Phamenoth 112, or possibly in Mecheir of a later year, e.g. 111.

⁹⁹ Maresch, in Gronewald e.a. (2013) 103 dated this papyrus after 130/27 on the basis of a price of 200 drachms for a kotyle of oil. The appendix of oil prices in Maresch (1996) 191 actually documents this price level no earlier than 114/3.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
	(expenditure)	Il. 9-10: (γίν.) (τάλ.) α Γψν εἰς ἀργυ() λό(γον) ἀργυ() κ χα(αλκοῦ) σν	1,900
	(expenditure)	Il. 18-19: (γίν.) (τάλ.) α σ εἰς ἀργυ() λό(γον) ἀργυ() (δραχμ.) ιβ χα() ω	1,800
<i>O. Bodl.</i> I 330 Thebes, late second or first cent.	Account	Il. 1-2: εἰς πρᾶσσειν ις ἀνὰ Αακ	1,920
<i>SB XVIII</i> 14012 99/8 or 37/6 ¹⁰⁰	Private account (purchase of cords)	Il. 3-6: ἐξ οἴκου ἀρπεδόνης μνᾶ(ι) ι τῆς μνᾶς χα(αλκοῦ) ω (γίνονται) χα(αλκοῦ) (τάλαντον) α Β (δραχμάς) ις καὶ τειμῆν δικρόσιν ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) κς (γίνονται) ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμαὶ) μβ	2,000
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 139 descr. early first cent.		40 silver drachms equated to 2 T 4,500 bronze drachms	1,650
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 191 descr. early first cent.		1 stater equated to 1,850 bronze drachms	1,850
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 123 early first cent.	Private account (inpayment)	l. 2: ἔχω διὰ τοῦ αὐ(τοῦ) ὥστε Ἰσιδώ(ρῳι) Νίλου (δραχμάς) δ χα(αλκοῦ) Ααν	1,950
	(inpayment)	l. 3: ἔχω διὰ Πετοσί(ριος) ὥστε Σεντοθοῆ(τι) (δραχμάς) δ χα(αλκοῦ) Ααν	1,950
<i>P. Oxy.</i> IV 788 early first cent.	Private account	00: (δρ.) δ Ααμ	1,940
<i>BGU XIV</i> 2428 Herakleopolites, late second–early first cent., or mid-first century ¹⁰¹	Account, perhaps of village scribe (inpayment)	l. 17: [–ca?–]α Θεώνος (δραχμαὶ) δ Αα	1,900

¹⁰⁰ Dated after 6 March 101 on HGV, but the text is explicitly dated year 16, Mecheir 21.

¹⁰¹ Dated 1 BC on HGV, but first century in Maresch, *Bronze und Silber*. Amounts of 35 silver drachms (Il. 35 and 36) and 175 silver drachms (l. 41) imply the existence of actual silver drachm coins. Such coins were struck in 115/4 (Svoronos 1664) and in 93/2

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 12,0 yr. 17, 97 or 64	Account of tax farmer	Descr.: ἀργύ(ριον) ἀνὰ Αω	1,800
	(value of wine)	ll. 39-40: (τάλαντα) γ Βυπ εἰς ἀργύ(ριον) ἀνὰ Ααν (δραχμαὶ) μ καὶ χα(λκοῦ) π	1,950
	(value of wheat)	ll. 51-53: (γίνονται) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) κδ καὶ χα(λκοῦ) (τάλαντον) α το εἰς ἀργύ(ριον) ἀνὰ Ααν ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) ιβ Εων κα[ι] χα(λκοῦ) φκ καταλί(πονται) ἐν οἴκῳ (δραχμαὶ) δ Ααν	1,950
		l. 69: ἀργυ(ρίου) ξη ἀνὰ Ατν ¹⁰² (τάλαντα) ε Γρν	1,950
	(inpayment from prison in village)	ll. 70-71: καὶ ἐκ Κερκεθή(ρεως) δι' Ἀμμο(νίου) εἰς τὰ δεσζμοῦ (δραχμαὶ) ιβ χα(λκοῦ) Εων	1,950
	(inpayment)	ll. 73-74: ἔχ[ω]ι παρὰ Ἀμμεινία εἰς τὴν πόλιν κθ (δραχμάς) δ εἰς (ὧν) πρᾶσις Ααξ ¹⁰³	1,950
	(value of wine)	ll. 107-108: (δραχμάς) δ ἀνὰ Ααν	1,980
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 175 Yr. 17, 97 or 64		Descr.: 3,800 bronze drachms for 8 silver drachms	1,900
		Descr.: 8 silver drachms = 3,700 bronze drachms	1,850
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 253 yr. 18, probably 96 ¹⁰⁴	(cash for travel expenses)	Descr.: Δχξ καὶ ἐφοδί(οι) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμάς) ς (γίνονται) (τάλαντον) α Ατξ	1,800

(Svoronos 1683), but not again until 54/3 (Svoronos 1848). The text is thus likely to belong either to the late second–early first century or to the mid-first century.

¹⁰² As the calculation makes clear, this is a misreading for Ααν.

¹⁰³ In *P. Tebt.* I, p. 501, Grenfell, Hunt and Smyly note that ξ seems to be an error, since the calculations at ll. 74-78 imply a stater of 1,950 bronze drachms.

¹⁰⁴ The date is almost certainly 96 rather than 63. The amount of 6 silver drachms implies the existence of actual didrachms or drachms. Ptolemy IX struck both denominations early in his reign, didrachms in 115/4 (Svoronos 1664), drachms in 116/5 (Svoronos 1661). So far as we know, Ptolemy XII struck drachms only in his second reign.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 121 Thegonis, yr. 21, probably 94 ¹⁰⁵	Account of tax farmer	Descr.: ἀργυ(ρίου) κδ ἀνὰ Αχν (τάλαντον) α Γξ	1,650
	(disbursement)	I. 5: (γίνονται) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) σξ ἀνὰ Αχ	1,600
	(cash for travel expenses)	I. 39: ἐφόδιον ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) ζ Βυ	1,600
	(expenditure)	II. 60-61: κζ. τοῖς [π]αρὰ τοῦ στρα(τηγοῦ) ἐληλυθό(σι) χάριν λαογρ(αφίας) ἀρ[γ]υ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) δ Αχ	1,600
	(expenditure)	I. 64: Ἀκουσιλάωι ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) η Γσ	1,600
	(expenditure)	I. 69: κη. Θρακί ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) δ Αχ	1,600
	(expenditure)	I. 81: Πετοσίρει ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) η Γσ	1,600
	(expenditure)	I. 86: ἀρμολίας κθ λ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) η <Γσ>	1,600
	(disbursement)	I. 139: πρὸς Αμ() λόγο(ς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) δ Αχ	1,600
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 189v Thegonis, yr. 21, probably 94 ¹⁰⁶	List of taxes (inpayment)	Descr.: Κοπρίας διὰ τοπάρχ(ου) ἀργυ(ρίου) κδ ἀνὰ Αχν	1,650
	(inpayment)	Descr.: Ἑρμία Ἀπίω(νος) ἀργυ(ρίου) η Γσ	1,600
	(disbursement)	Descr.: εἰς πόλιν ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμαὶ) ιβ ἀνὰ Αχμ χα(λκοῦ) Δξκ	1,640

¹⁰⁵ The date is almost certainly 94 rather than 61. An amount of 6 silver drachms is mentioned in I. 39; for the implications, see preceding note. Hoogendijk (2010) 313, preferred the later date, following the judgement of the original editors.

¹⁰⁶ Hoogendijk (2010) 313 showed that the account in *P. Tebt.* I 121 continued on the verso of *P. Tebt.* I 189, which must be dated only one month later. She preferred to date these texts to 61.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>BGU</i> VI 1292 Eunikon/Ennikon, 83/2–81/80 ¹⁰⁷	Private account (inpayment)	I. 36: ἔτους λε Φαῶφ[ι] Διογένο(υς) (δραχμάς) η Αω	1,800
	(inpayment)	I. 37: ια Διογένης ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμάς) κδ ἀνὰ Αα (γίνονται) (τάλαντον(?)) α Ευ	1,900
	(inpayment)	I. 47: Ὀνησίμου ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) κδ (γίνονται) (τάλαντον) α Εφκ	1,920
	(inpayment)	II. 51-52: Φαρμούθι ις Πετεσοῦχου ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) μ ἀν(ὰ) Αα (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) γ Αφ	1,950
	(inpayment)	I. 58: ιθ Πετσοῦχος ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) δ Ααν	1,950
	(inpayment)	I. 76: ιθ Πάντιτος ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) η Ααξ	1,960
	(inpayment)	II. 78-79: ἔτους α Θῶυθ ε Πά[ν]τιτος ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμάς) τ ἀν(ὰ) Β (γίνονται) [.] α	2,000
<i>P. Tebt.</i> I 209 after 12 Apr. 75	List of tax payments	I. 5 (repeated I. 14): ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμάς) ις (τάλαντον) α (δραχμαὶ) ακ	1,730
<i>P. Freib.</i> IV 53 Yr. 13, 25 Apr. 68 or 18 Apr. 39	Memorandum regarding tax payment	II. 18-20: (τάλαντα) β Αψνε αἱ ἀργυ(ρίου) κη ἀνὰ Αω (τάλαντα) β χ . καὶ χα(λκοῦ) Αρνε	1,800
<i>P. Oxy.</i> IV 784 after 53/2 ¹⁰⁸	Private account (inpayment)	Descr: τιμῆ(ς) ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμῶν) η ὕπ(ερ) τοῦ πατρὸς(ς) Βψ	1,350

¹⁰⁷ The latest date in the papyrus is 8 April 79, but the account covers a period of four years.

¹⁰⁸ Dated to the first century by its first editor, but assumed to belong near the beginning of the sequence of documents attesting the *timē* of the stater by Burkhalter & Picard (2005) 68. It is here proposed that the low value reflects the debasement of the silver coinage in 53/2.

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>SB</i> XIV 11515 Karanis, probably after 53/2 ¹⁰⁹	Private account (outpayments)	Il. 3-6: Πασόξ(ει) [ἀ]δ(ελφῶ) ἀργυρίου) (δρ.) δ Νουμ(ηνίωι) ἀργυρίου) (δρ.) δ (γίνεται) ἀργυρίου) (δρ.) η κη() χα(λκοῦ) Εφ	2,750
<i>BGU</i> VIII 1827 Herakleopolites, 15 July 51	Memorandum to strategos re court case (recovery of dowry in divorce)	Il. 22-23: [δ]λυρῶν (ἀρτάβας) ρκ καὶ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμᾶς) ρκ τῶ[ν συναγομέν]ων δλυρῶν (ἀρτάβας) υπ καὶ ἀργυ(ρίου) (δραχμᾶς) υπ ὡς τοῦ (τετραδράχμου) χα(λκοῦ) (δραχμαὶ) Αφν	1,950
<i>BGU</i> VIII 1885 Herakleopolites, after 47/6 ¹¹⁰	Private account	I. 7: [..] [.] (δραχμαὶ) γ χα(λκοῦ) (δραχμαὶ) Αε	1,340

TABLE 4. *Timê* of the Stater of Unknown Date

DOCUMENT & DATE	TYPE OF RECORD OR TRANSACTION	FORMULA	VALUE
<i>O. Tait</i> I 314 = <i>O. Bodl.</i> I 314 (Thebes, probably late Ptolemaic)		Il. 2-4: τούτων ἀργυ(ρίου) στατήρας ἰς ἀνὰ Βσ (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) ς Αυ ἀλλαγῆς χα(λκοῦ) (δραχμαὶ) Βυ	2,200

¹⁰⁹ Dated second to first century in the *editio princeps* of Youtie. Clarysse (2013) 244 notes that the name Ision in Col. I, l. 3, is otherwise known only from the Roman period. This suggests a date in the late Ptolemaic or early Roman period. The high value of the stater could reflect the extreme debasement of Ptolemaic silver coinage in the second reign of Ptolemy XII. To the extent that coinage of high purity survived, it must have commanded a higher price than the debased silver.

¹¹⁰ The sum of 3 drachms implies the existence of drachm coins in silver. Ptolemy XII struck an issue of drachms in 54/3 (Svoronos 1838), and Cleopatra VII struck drachms in 47/6 (Svoronos 1853) and again in 42/1 (*Boston* 2303). The Ptolemaic silver coinage was debased by two thirds in 53/2, the year after Ptolemy XII struck his drachms. The low *timê* suggests that the drachms in question were of debased metal, thus drachms of Cleopatra.

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EMOTIONS IN GREEK PRIVATE PAPYRUS LETTERS

Abstract: Study of how emotions are expressed in Greek papyrus letters from the Ptolemaic period until the 7th century AD. Starting point is the Greek vocabulary concerning emotions, e.g. being worried, sad, angry, afraid, hopeful, glad etc. In many cases we can only retrace formulaic expressions and we cannot be sure real emotions are involved. These we can retrace only in a few ‘emotional letters’, in which the tone and style (use of superlatives and other intensifiers, repetition, irony) rather than the vocabulary are vehicles of emotion. Some of the most interesting cases have been collected in a small anthology at the end of the article.

Emotions in antiquity can only be studied through the written word, which means that a lot of information, such as facial expressions (made visible in paintings and sculpture, and in the stereotyped masks of the theater) and tone of voice, are not available, and that more often than not we study the changing terms people used to express feelings, rather than the feelings themselves¹. Even for the people involved, it is often difficult to express their feelings in words, as is neatly expressed by the writer of *BGU IV* 1131.27-28 (= Olsson 1925 no. 9): “if it would be possible to write you tears, I would have described (my misery) with my tears” (ἢ [l. εἰ] ἦν δάκρυα σοὶ γράφειν, γεγραφήκειν ἂν ἀπὸ τῶν δακρύων). I have limited my research field to one genre, private letters, because here personal relationships and emotions are expressed more often and more directly than in contracts or official letters. Petitions also present a lot of emotions, but often in stereotyped formulas or rhetorical phrases, stressing the misbehaviour of the opponent and the good intentions of the writer.²

I combined two methods to find out how people expressed their emotions. I started with reading through as many letters as possible,³ using for this anthologies like Olsson (1925), Hunt & Edgar (1932), Naldini (1968), Bagnall & Cribiore (2006), etc. Thanks to this cursory reading I could

¹ For the problems involved in studying emotions in societies of the past, see most recently Matt (2014), Cairns & Fulkerson (2015), and Plamper (2015). For emotions in demotic letters, see Depauw (2006) 281-284.

² For emotions in petitions, see Kotsifou (2012b).

³ The Trismegistos database [1 Jan. 2017] lists 8044 Greek letters, of which 4736 are marked as private (but the official/private subdivision is often fuzzy). This article was written for the Papyrological Congress of Geneva in 2010 and it was not possible to revise the figures in the notes throughout, though I added information from texts published later when I came across them.

identify typical words recurring in similar situations. With the help of the Duke Databank it is easy to search for these words, and even particular forms or combinations of them. Searching the verb χαίρειν yields thousands of instances of ‘NN to NN chairein (greetings)’, a formula which does not express any emotion, but the aorist ἐχάρην usually expresses a genuine feeling of joy. In the end I gathered 440 letters, ranging from the third century BC to the end of the Byzantine period, in which emotional themes come to the fore [see the database at: www.trismegistos.org/tmcorpusdata/9].

Emotions in letters usually apply either to the writer or to the addressee; reactions of third persons are less frequently described.⁴ A third of the passages deal with contact or lack of contact between writer and addressee. In times of e-mail, twitter and mobile phones it is difficult to imagine how problematic it was in antiquity to keep in touch with a person who was far away in another city or another country: since there was no regular post, letters had to be passed on by friends or acquaintances travelling from the place of the writer to that of the addressee and back again.⁵ Moreover, since many people were illiterate they also had to find someone on the spot to write the letter for them or to read it to the illiterate addressee, as in text 4.3 below: “(to) the person who reads this letter, whoever you are, make a small effort and translate what is written in this letter to the women and pass it on”. Being away from home involved

⁴ E.g. *P. Cairo Zen.* III 59368.21 (III BC; φόβος); *BGU XVI* 2604.10 (28 BC; Skaliophos is angry); *O. Krok.* 99 (AD II; the prefect is angry, with the Latin calque στομαχέω); *P. Bremen* 61.25-28 (a man is three times called “a fool”); *P. Giss. Univ.* III 29.8 (AD II-III; Herakleides is leaving in tears); *P. Oxy.* XII 2986.10-11 (AD II-III; ‘the master’ is angry); *P. Lond.* VI 1914.27-29 (AD IV; the *praepositus* regrets his misdemeanour; Athanasius is desperate (μεγάλως ἀθύμει); *P. Oxy.* LVI 3873.4-7 (AD VII; ‘the master’ is worried); *BGU I* 246 (AD II-III; Hermione is sad); *P. Cairo Zen.* I 59059 and 59021.21 (III BC), *P. Cairo Masp.* II 67202.2 (AD VI; unnamed persons are angry); *P. Col.* X 252.8 = *SB XX* 14278.8 (AD 75-99; father is angry); *P. Oxy.* XII 1488 (a third person is in love); *SB V* 7655.20-22 (AD VI; a third person is a fool); *SB XVI* 12326.1 (text 4.7 below; the daughter of the addressee was angry, [ἡγανύ]κτησε); *SB XIV* 11853.8-95 (AD III-IV; your daughter is angry); *BGU II* 530.34 (AD I; mother blames you).

⁵ The problems involved in correspondence over a distance are well illustrated by *P. Merton II* 82 (AD II): “I wrote you twice, apart from this letter, and perhaps nothing was delivered to you. And you wrote to me, saying: ‘You do not write to me at all anymore.’ But could I have been so rude (ἄμαθής) as not to write to you? For, quite definitely, we do write to you. Perhaps they do not deliver (the letters)”; and by *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3932.7-10 (AD VI): “You ought not to blame (μέμψασθαι) me that you wrote to me once and a second time and a third and did not receive returns. God almighty knows, since the time I left Oxyrhynchus I received nothing except this one and only letter of yours”. In *P. Mich.* VIII 496.6-8 (AD II) Apollonios complains jokingly that “he has used a whole papyrus roll in writing to you and received barely one letter in reply”.

some risks, perhaps even more in the mind of those staying at home than was in fact the case. As a result many letters express the anxiousness of those staying at home, or contain an entreaty by the person travelling not to worry.

1. CONTACT AND LACK OF CONTACT (138 LETTERS OF 440, 30%)

Writers often complain that the correspondent has not replied to their letters. Their reaction to this is in the main threefold :

- sometimes there is only regret or disappointment (λυπέομαι);⁶
- more often they are worried. The most common word is ἀγωνιῶ⁷, more rarely one finds φροντίζω (care), κήδομαι (be concerned), μεριμνάω (be anxious), ἄθυμέω⁸ (be disheartened) and ὀλιγορέω. Ὀλιγορέω can indeed mean “to be worried”, e.g. in *BGU* IV 1097 (AD 41-67): οὐκ ὀλιγορῶ ἀλλὰ εὐψυχοῦσα παραμένω “I am not worried, but I remain optimistic” or *P. Oxy.* LVI 3873.4-7 (AD VI-VII) where μεριμνάω and ὀλιγορέω alternate as variants.⁹
- in other cases the writer complains that the correspondent made no effort to keep contact.¹⁰ The usual word here is μέφομαι (to blame), which we will meet again in other contexts. Here the reproach is often formulaic and certainly does not point to negative feelings. On the contrary, the addressee is pushed to intensify or renew contacts.

⁶ See e.g. *BGU* III 845.8 (AD II; “I am disappointed when somebody passes by and does not bring me a letter”); *P. Haun.* II 21 (AD 200-349; “I am very disappointed (οὐκ ὀλίγως λυποῦμαι) because you do not send anything”).

⁷ *P. Yale* I 42.7 (187 BC; ἀγωνιῶν ἔνεκα τοῦ μήδ’ ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἀκηκοέναι τὰ κατὰ σέ); *SB* XII 10799 (AD 14-41); *BGU* IV 1078 = Wilcken, *Chrest.* 59 (AD 38); *P. Herm.* 11.13 (AD IV); *O. Krok.* 93 (AD 108-115; ἂν ταραχὴ γένηται οὐκ ὀλίγως ἀγωνιῶ περὶ σοῦ).

⁸ Ἀθυμέω is used in this weakened sense in *O. Did.* 424 (AD 125-140; “I know that you too are very disheartened (λίαν ἄθυμεῖς) since Apuleius was moved away from you. I too am disheartened (ἀθυμῶ) since the two, Apuleius and Herianus, were moved ways from me, but nevertheless we must bear it bravely. The gods willing, we shall greet hem again”); *SB* XXII 15603.7 (AD III; “I wonder how nobody brought me a letter from you and for this reason I am depressed (ἀθυμῶ) because I do not know how your family is doing”).

⁹ See also *SB* XVIII 13762.20 (AD V-VI; ὀλιγορήσαμεν - - μή τί ποτε συνέβη ὑμῖν); AD VI-VI); *PSI* XIV 1404.14-15 (AD 41; ὀλιγορῶ περὶ σοῦ); *P. Lips.* I 110.14-15 (AD III-IV; ἕως νῦν ὀλιγορῶ τὰ περὶ σοῦ μὴ κομισάμενός σου γράμματα).

¹⁰ *SB* VI 9017.8 (AD I-II; μέφομαί σε because you have not replied). In *P. Oxy.* XLVIII 3420.42-43 (AD IV) the writer reproaches his correspondent that he did not properly read his letters (ἴσως οὐδὲ τὰ γράμματα μου ἀναγινώσκεις).

Instead of using an explicit verb of reproach censure can be expressed by common expression θαυμάζω πῶς, usually followed by a negative clause, ‘I wonder why you did not do this’, which is also often used to blame a correspondent for not writing.¹¹ This seems to have become a kind of fixed formula with a lot of minor variants: θαυμάζω πῶς οὐκ ἔγραψάς μοι ἐπιστολήν.¹²

Very similar reactions deal with the physical absence of the correspondent, which is often explicitly regretted,¹³ e.g. *P. Oxy.* XIV 1676.10 (AD 324-349) “I was very upset (λίαν ἐλυπήθην) that you did not come for the birthday of the child - - I regret (λυποῦμαι) again that you are away from me” (AD IV). Departure is an emotional moment, and in several instances the writer regrets that he could not meet his correspondent when one of them was taking leave.¹⁴ More than once the writer stresses that he wants to see his correspondent *and* that he wants contact by letter. A good example is a soldiers’ letter, written from Rome: “When I reached Rome, I learned that you departed from there and I was very sorry (λίαν ἐλυπήθην) because I did not see you. But now I beg you to let me know how you are, because I am worried (ἀγωνιῶ).”¹⁵

Often the writer worries about the health (σωτηρία, δλοκληρία) of his correspondent. This is certainly a *topos*, but we should not forget that the average lifetime in Greco-Roman Egypt was a mere 35 years and that without antibiotics even an ordinary flu could be fatal.¹⁶ In some cases

¹¹ The expression recurs in 10% of our documentation (43 letters out of a total of 440). E.g. *P. Mich.* VIII 479.4-5 (AD 100-150); *BGU* IV 1041.12 (AD II; “I wonder how you did not write me a letter”); *SB* XII 15603.7 (AD 250-300; “I wonder how nobody brought me a letter from you”); *P. Kellis* I 65.3 (AD 300-350; “I received not a single letter about anything at all”); *P. Merton* I 28.4 (AD IV-V) etc. For a full list, see *P. Ups. Frid.* 10.1-2 note.

¹² *BGU* IV 1041; *P. Kellis* I 65.3; *P. Merton* I 28.4; *P. Mich.* VIII 500.3 and XV 751; *P. Oxy.* XXXIV 2729.4; *P. Oxy.* LIX 3997.3-4; *P. Prag.* I 101.3; *PSI* XIV 1445; *SB* XVIII 13591.6, 10; *SB* XII 15603.7 (all between AD 100 and 500).

¹³ *P. Freib.* IV 69 (AD II-III; “I wonder how you have again neglected to come”); *P. Kellis* I 64.5 (AD 300-350; “I wonder how you have stayed at home”).

¹⁴ *SB* XX 14132.26 (AD I; “I regret (ἐλυπήθην) that I did not see you at my departure for Alexandria”); *P. Amh.* II 145.167 (late AD IV; “I regret (ἐλυπήθην) that you went away without a word”); *SB* XVIII 13867.94-97 (AD II; “I am upset (δργίζομαι) that you did not leave from me, but went off without <seeing> me”); *P. Oxy.* III 526.3 (AD II; “I was not so unfeeling (οὐκ ἤμην ἀπαθής) as to leave you without a word”); *P. Gron.* 17.3-5 (AD III-IV; “your sudden departure grieved (ἐλύπησε) me”). Ἀλόγως in this context does not mean “without reason” as most editors and dictionaries translate, but “without a word”, see my note in Clarysse (2011).

¹⁵ *P. Mich.* VIII 487.8 (AD II).

¹⁶ See e.g. *PSI* III 299 (AD III) (= Hunt & Edgar (1932) no. 158), where not only the writer Tatianus but all members of the household have been seriously ill.

the writer worries because he knows his addressee has been seriously ill, e.g., “I am worried every day that you would become sick again” (ἐγὼ δὲ ἀγωνι[ῶ κα]θ’ ἡμέραν, μὴ πάλιν νοθ[ρ]ὸς ᾦς) or “until today I am worried because you left me while you were ill” (ἕως σήμερ[ο]ν ἀγωνιῶ διότι νοθρευόμενος ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ἐξῆλθες).¹⁷ In *P. Oxy.* XII 1481 (I BC) a soldier had avoided alarming his mother and now tries to reassure her: “I am not ill, so you should not worry (μὴ λυποῦ). I am very sorry (λίαν ἐλυπήθην) to hear that you heard about this, for I was not seriously ill. I am angry (μέμφομαι) with the person who told you this.” In *P. Oxy.* VI 939.14 (AD IV), “an affectionately worded Christian letter” in a polished style, Flavianus apologizes for having troubled his correspondent about the health of his mistress, because he was “beside himself” (οὐκ ὦν ἐν ἑμαυτῷ) of anxiety.

Reassuring the other side about one’s own situation is one of the most common *topoi* in the letters. Thirty times we find expressions like μὴ ἀγωνία, ἀμερίμνει, ἀμερίμνος γίνου, μὴ λυποῦ, but often the writer also asks to be put at ease himself by a letter. Foreseeing the reaction of his correspondent or reacting upon it the writer also asks him not to be blamed (μὴ μέμφου).¹⁸ These expressions are so common (36 instances for ‘do not worry’, 25 for ‘do not blame me’) that they tend to become formulaic.

Sometimes a personal touch is added: “I wish we could fly, since we are worried (ἀγωνιῶμεν) when we do not see you” (the addressee, the strategos Apollonios, has been ill). The lady in question even adds: “we die when we do not see you every day” (*P. Giss.* 17.12; AD 113-120).

Real dangers are (of course) exceptional. Travellers returning from the Red Sea coast through the inhospitable Arabian desert celebrate a safe homecoming by means of a *proskynema* (ἐσώθην ἐκ κινδύνων) and this is echoed in some letters, like *BGU* II 615.5 and 22: “learning that he is safely back I was very glad (ἐπιγνοῦσα ὅτι διεσώθῃ ἐχάρην πολλά)”. Compare also the letter in which Aline expresses her anxiety to her husband who is absent during the Jewish revolt of AD 117 (text 4.1 below). In *O. Krok.* 93 (AD 108-115) a soldier in the eastern desert is afraid of a Bedouin raid: “You know that, if a disturbance arises, I worry a great

¹⁷ *P. Brem.* 61.14 (AD 113-120) and *P. Mich.* VIII 479.6-84 (AD 100-150). See also *P. Cairo Zen.* I 59135.5 (256 BC) (φροντίζομεν ἀκούοντες ὅτι κατὰτείνεις σαυτόν; 256 BC); *P. Wisc.* II 84.5-8 (late AD II) about a sick mother.

¹⁸ *SB* XX 15157.11-12 (AD 1-50); *SB* I 5314.1 (AD IV-VI).

deal about you. For I am also afraid for myself. For we are not with many here” (ἄν παραχῇ γένηται οὐκ ὀλίγος ἀγωνιῶν περὶ σοῦ· περὶ γὰρ ἑμαυτοῦ φοβοῦμε. οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν πολλὸν (= πολλοὶ) ἐ[νθά]δε). The situation of Metrodora writing to her husband Kleon, who has fallen in disfavour with the king is also expressed by the word φόβος: νυνὶ δὲ ἐν φόβῳ εἰμι οὐ μετρίῳ - ἐν μείζονι φόβῳ (*P. Petrie* III 42 H8 = *P. Petrie Kleon* 1 = Bagnall & Cribiore, p. 110; III BC).

When news arrives by letter or when the correspondent promises to come in person¹⁹ the writer expresses pleasure, usually with the verb χαίρω²⁰, more rarely with ἡδομαι²¹ or εὐφραίνομαι.²² Even finding a person going the right direction can be a reason for joy.²³ In many cases the letter which has arrived brought good news about the health of the correspondent, e.g. *P. Col.* VIII 215.7: “I am glad to hear that you are better”.²⁴ In the Byzantine period the stereotyped formula ‘having heard about your health, I am glad’ no longer shows real involvement.²⁵

It is not uncommon to find regret of separation and pleasure of new contact side by side in the same letter.²⁶ Thus *P. Oxy.* LIX 3991.24-29 (AD II-III), a letter from a woman to her brother or husband, combines all

¹⁹ *P. Laur.* II 41; *P. Mich.* VIII 474; *P. Mich. Michail.* 23; *P. Oxy.* LV 3807.43; *P. Oxy.* LIX 3991.3; *P. Ross.-Georg.* V 6.25; *P. Yale* I 80.

²⁰ E.g. *P. Eleph.* 13 (ἐχάρην ἐπὶ τῷ αἰσθέσθαι τὰ κατὰ σέ); *P. Yale* I 42 (187 BC); *SB* III 6823.3 (AD 41-54; ἐχάρην μεγάλως λαβὼν σου [ἐ]πιστολήν); *P. Sarap.* 95 (AD 100-150); *P. Col.* VIII 215 (AD II; ἐχάρην ἀκούσασα ὅτι κομψῶς ἔσχηκας, after illness); *P. Mich.* VIII 495.11 (AD II); *P. Petaus* 29.4 (text 4.6 below; the addressee is saved from danger); *BGU* I 332.6 (AD II-III; ἐχάρην κοιμισαμένην γράμματα ὅτι καλῶς διεσώθητε, repeated in I.12 (ἐὰν γράμματά σου λάβω, ἰλαρά εἰμι περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν); *SB* XIV 12177 (AD 200-225); *P. Kellis* I 63 (AD 300-350; πάνυ ἡδόμεθα καὶ χαίρομεν κοιμούμενοι τῆς ὑμετέρας εὐνοίας τεκμήρια καὶ ἄσμενα ὑμῶν γράμματα; here the two verbs are combined); *P. Oxy.* XIV 1676.5 (AD 324-350); *P. Oxy.* LIX 3998.23 (AD IV); *P. Ross.-Georg.* III 9 (AD 375-400); *PSI* VII 837 (AD III-IV).

²¹ *P. Bremen* 20.4 (AD 116-120; ἦσθην ἐπὶ τῷ σὲ ἐρρῶσθαι μετὰ τῶν σῶν); *P. Oxy.* XLII 3069.4 (AD III-IV; πάνυ ἦσθην κοιμισάμενός σου τὰ γράμματα); *P. Sarap.* 85.4 (ἦσθην ὅτι ἐρρωσai κατὰ τὰς εὐχὰς ἡμῶν) and 89.3 (AD 90-133; *PSI* XV 1555.4 (AD III; λίαν ἦσθην ὅτι ἐρρωμένοι ἔστε).

²² E.g. *SB* XXVIII 17238.2: [η]ὐφράνθημεν ἐπὶ τῷ σὲ παραγενέσθαι (BC III/II).

²³ *BGU* IV 1081 (AD II-III; εὐκαιρίαν εὐρὼν τοῦ πρὸς σὲ ἐρχομένου ἐχάρην); *P. Col.* XI 301 (AD IV; σφόδρα ἐχάρην εὐκαιρίαν εὐρὼν γράμματα πέμψαι).

²⁴ Cf. *P. Iand.* VI 111.24 (AD I-II; “I am glad to hear that Didymos has escaped his illness”); *P. Hamb.* I 88 (AD 113-115; “I am glad receiving your letter about the good news”) (after an illness).

²⁵ χαίρω ἐγνωκῶς τὴν ὑγίειαν ὑμῶν, e.g. *P. Laur.* I 22; II 46; *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3932; *PSI* III 225; *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3932.7.

²⁶ E.g. *P. Oxy.* XIV 1676 (AD 324-350); *P. Amh.* II 145 (AD 375-425).

the foregoing aspects in a long sentence which takes up most of her letter: “I was very glad (λίαν ἐχάρην) when your letters were brought, saying that you would come to us for the festival — we had worried a lot (ἐν ἀγωνίαι γεγόνειμεν οὐ μικρᾷ) for a long time when no letters of yours were brought.” In *PSI* IV 333 (257 BC) Zenon’s correspondent says “we were worried (συνέβη ἡμῖν ἀγωνιάσαι) upon hearing that you were dragging in an illness for considerable time — but now we rejoice (ἡσθημεν).” In *P. Amh.* II 145.16-17 the writer was sad (ἐλυπήθην) because the addressee went away without saying goodbye, but now he is glad (ἐχάρην) because a speedy return is announced.

2. OTHER DISPLAYS OF EMOTION

I omit two less common themes here which have been studied thoroughly by others. Letters of condolence were collected and analysed in Chapa 1998²⁷, and the philophrontic side of papyrus letters is studied in detail by Koskeniemi 1956. Friendship is a recurring theme from the Roman period onwards (the only Ptolemaic example I could find is *P. Mich. Zen.* 57) and in the later period may lead to pseudo-philosophical digressions, e.g. “I would gladly leave behind everything in order not to lose my friendship to you”; “your well-being (εὐπραγία) is our common good fortune (εὐτυχία)”, “you provide me a double feast (δίσσιν ἐορτήν παρέχων), if you ask me very great services”, “you saw my innate love for you, ever renewed, as through a mirror” (ὥς δι’ ἐσ[ό]πτρου κατῖδες τὴν πρὸς σέ μου ἔ[μ]φυτον στοργήν), “you know that I do not alter myself nor do I have two souls concerning you” (οἶδ[ας] δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἀλλάσσω ἑμαυτὸν πώποτε οὐδὲ δι[ύο] ψυχὰς ἕχω εἰς σέ).²⁸

This friendly attitude of the writer is then sometimes contrasted with the attitude of the correspondent, in order to put him under pressure, e.g., “I love (φιλῶ) you always, but you are neglecting me”, “I always keep my love for you (ἐχόμενος τῆς εἰς σέ ἀεὶ στοργῆς) and I often sent you letters. You have not even once deigned me worthy of a letter”; “I wonder how you went away from me. You have shown me by your letter that you

²⁷ See also Kotsifou (2012c).

²⁸ *P. Lond.* III 897 (AD 84); *P. Oxy.* XIV 1766 (AD 130-200); *P. Warren* 20.6-8 (AD III); *P. Oxy.* XXXI 2603.17-19 (AD IV); *P. Giss. Univ.* III 31.17-19 (AD 300-350).

look down upon me. God knows how I love and honour you in my heart as my own brother” (ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν πῶς σε κατὰ ψυχὴν φιλῶ καὶ τιμῶ ὡς ἀδελφόν μου).²⁹

Love letters are conspicuously absent from our documentation.³⁰ This certainly has to do with a lack of privacy: the letter was brought by an acquaintance, who was present when it was opened. Since most women could not read, letters had to be read out to them, as already noted. Among the exceptions are a letter by a wife to her husband, saying that “she does not see the sun because she cannot see him” and that she has “no other sun than you”,³¹ and of course the famous letter of Serenus to his wife Isidora, who has left the house and “sent him letters that could move a stone” (text 4.2).

Expressions of parental and filial love are more common, no doubt because these feelings were expected by the other members of the household and it was opportune to advertise them, especially in the later period. The subject is explicitly expressed in *P. Ryl.* IV 624.14-16: “For this we consider to be a duty that comes first and excels all others, since we are taught by nature’s law to watch over and care (κῆδεσθαι καὶ φροντίζειν) for no one so much as for a good father” (AD IV). A mother writes to her son “write me about your health, knowing the fear for a child” (φόβον, i. φόβον τέκνου) (*BGU* II 380.19; AD III). In the so-called ‘happy family archive’ of the second century AD,³² Sempronius warns his brother not to grieve (λυπεῖν) their mother, because “we should revere as a god the person who has given birth to us, especially such a good person”, and he concludes with a note on “the sweetness of our revered parents” (*SB* III 6263). The letter consists of two parts, one for the mother and one for his brother, which the mother is not expected to hear. On several occasions the love for a person is compared to the love for one’s parents or sisters: ‘I care for you like for a child of my own’,

²⁹ *P. Oxy.* XIV 1757 (AD II); *P. Oxy.* XIV 1766 (AD II); *SB* XIV 11644 (AD I-II). See also *P. Mich. Zen.* 57 (III BC).

³⁰ See e.g. Paoli (1923); the word ‘love’ does not occur in the index of Bagnall & Cribiore (2006). Emotions of love and sexual desire are common in magical papyri though, cf. Montserrat (1996) 180-209.

³¹ *P. Oxy.* XLII 3059 (AD II). Another exception is *P. Wash.* II 108 (AD VI), where mention is made of ‘fever of love craziness’ in the heart (ὁ πυρε[τὸς τῇ]ς ἐρ[ωτικῆς μανίας] (though this is largely a supplement) and of an arrow of Aphrodite (ἡ Ἀφροδίτη ἐν βέλος).

³² For this archive, see Vandorpe e.a. (2015) 358-359. The name was given by Bell (1950).

‘like a son of your own and a brother’, I consider you not only as a brother, but as a father and lord and god’.³³

Sometimes relations between family members also led to frictions or outright quarrels. The recurrent excuse ‘do not be angry’ tries to avoid such conflicts, but conflicts did arise from time to time. The background of familial unity is turned upside down when a quarrel erupts between members: thus Ploutogeneia writes to her mother “you do not treat me like a daughter, but like your enemy”, or an angry mother reproaches her son: “Is it for this that I carried you ten months and I nursed you during three years that you are not capable of remembering me by letter?”³⁴ Several examples of such family tensions figure in the little anthology at the end of this paper (4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9).

Though there is apparently no word for homesickness in ancient Greek (the word νοσταλγία was coined in the late 17th century)³⁵, the feeling did of course exist, as is visible in the *Odyssey*. In a few cases in our papyri the writer stresses that he is all alone, far away from home, e.g. in *P. Sarap.* 96: “I ask you not to forget me (ἀμελεῖν) now that I am so far (or long) away (ἐν ἀπουσίαι τοιαύτηι)” (AD 100-150), or *P. Mich.* III 203.17-19, in which the soldier Saturnilus, stuck in the deep South for several months, writes to his mother: “if you wish a little to see me, I wish it greatly and pray daily to the gods that they may quickly give me a good chance to come” (ἐ[ῖ] ὑμεῖς θέλετέ μοι [μ]ικρὸν εἰδεῖν, ἐγὼ μέγα, καὶ εὖχομαι καθ’ ἡμέραν<v> τοῖς θεοῖς πῶς [δῶσ]ου[σι] τὰ[χ]ὺ τὴν εὐοδίαν τοῦ ἐλθεῖν). Apollinarios, sent on mission to Bosra in Iraq, writes to his mother in Karanis about his homesickness in moving words “each time I think of you I do not eat nor drink, but I cry (οὐκ ἐσθίω οὔτε πίνω ἀλλὰ κλαίω)” (*P. Mich.* VIII 465.25). In *P. Bouriant* 25 (AD IV) the female writer tells her aunt that her mother has died and that she is now “left in solitude without a companion in a foreign country”. Serenilla writes to her father Sokrates that she is alone in Alexandria (μόνη ἱμὶ ἐγώ) and wants him to reply so that she knows she has a father over there (*BGU* II 385.4-7 = Wilcken, *Chrest.* 133; AD II-III). When a soldier writes “I sat down along the road every day waiting until you would arrive” (*O. Claud.* I 168), one feels the loneliness of his military outpost in the eastern desert. Most

³³ E.g. *P. Lond.* III 897 (AD 84); *P. Oxy.* XII 1493.10-11 (AD 275-325); *P. Flor.* III 371 (AD IV); *P. Oxy.* XIV 1767 (AD III); *P. Mich.* III 209 (AD II-III).

³⁴ *P. Mich.* III 221 (AD 250-300); *O. Beren.* II 129 (AD I).

³⁵ Matt (2014) 43.

explicit is the plaintive letter by the Christian Ammon to his mother: “I have nobody with me, no sister nor brother, no son, nobody else but God alone. Please, mother, remember me for one day at least, so that I do not die in a foreign land, without having anybody”.³⁶

Some typical *topoi*, such as abstinence of food, drink and sleep, are found in text 4.1 below and in *SB* I 4317.3-5 (about AD 200), where a husband writes from Alexandria to his sister-wife somewhere in Egypt: ὕπνος οὐ[κ] ἔρχεται μοι διὰ νυκτὸς χάρειν τῆς σῆς σαπροεραισει καὶ τῆς σῆς ἀπρω/θυμίας ἦν ποιεῖς μοι περὶ τῶν ἐμῶν (“sleep does not come to me at night because of your inconsistency and your lack of zeal concerning my affairs”). Sleeplessness is also mentioned in *P. Rainer Cent.* 71.16 (AD III), *BGU* VIII 1764.9 (ἀγρυπνία; BC 100-30), *P. Mich.* VIII 473.16-17 (μὴ καθεῦ[δο]ν μεριμνῶν), and *P. Lond.* III 1244.6-7 (AD V-VII). In *P. Alex. Giss.* 58 (= *SB* X 10652 B; AD 115-116) Eudaimonis writes to her son, the strategos Apollonios, who is involved in the Jewish war that “she does not stop praying for him night and day to all the gods and goddesses that they may protect you” (οὐ καρτε[ρ]ῶ νυκτ[ὸ]ς ἡμέρας εὐχομένη τοῖς θεοῖς πᾶσι καὶ πᾶσαις) ὅπως [σὲ] διαφυλά[ξ]ωσι³⁷. Neglect of hygiene as a demonstration of grief is found in *P. Oxy.* XVIII 2190 (ca. 100 AD), *BGU* III 846 (AD II), *P. Flor.* III 332 (early II AD) and text 4.2³⁸.

3. ‘EMOTIONAL’ LETTERS

The most emotional letters were not found by means of a word search. Some of them do indeed contain typical words like ‘being angry’, ‘worry’, ‘blame’ or ‘be happy’, but more often it is the tone of the letter which shows that the writer is emotionally involved. Truly abusive language is found in *SB* XX 14463 (AD V), where Valerius addresses Athanasius

³⁶ *PSI* VIII 1161 = Naldini (1998) no. 72 (AD IV). See also the discussion in Koskeniemi (1956) 110-111. Compare *P. Bad.* IV 48.16 (AD 127), where Dionysia reproaches her husband Theon that he has “left her behind alone like the dogs”.

³⁷ The editor reads δ[ι]α[σ]υ[λ]α[β]ῶσι; he is followed by M. Kortus, *Briefe des Apollonios-Archives aus der Sammlung Papyri Gissenses*, 1999, p. 127. The verb διασυλλαμβᾶν is, however, an *addendum lexicis* (registered as such in the 1996 Supplement of Liddell-Scott-Jones) and its meaning is unclear. Kortus rightly refers to διαφυλλάττειν as the expected verb, and this is what can be recognized on the (rather dark) plate on the Gissen website <http://bibd.uni-giessen.de/papyri/images/pgiss-inv245recto.jpg>.

³⁸ Cf. Kotsifou (2012a) 84-85 and (2012b) 405.

as ‘bad old man, traitor, pimp’ (κακόγηρε, προδότα, πορνοβοσκέ), or in *O. Did.* 360 (AD 88-96), where in a quarrel one of the parties shouts ἀπολοῦ “go to hell” and “even said worse things” (εἶρηκε καὶ χεῖρω). In *O. Did.* 395 (AD 120-125) Philokles, the pimp of the eastern desert, quotes a letter by a woman saying to him “you are completely worthless” (ἄχρεϊός εἶ). Philokles replies that the other party is worthless, not he.

A letter may be so full of irony that a computer search will not recognise the real feeling of the writer. In *P. Tebt.* II 424 (AD III) Sarapammon congratulates Piperas for his stupidity : εἰ μὲν ἐπιμένεις σου τῇ ἀπονοίᾳ, συγχαίρω σοι, “if you remain in your stupidity, I congratulate you”. The ‘congratulations’ are clearly meant ironically here. The scolding letter *P. Cairo Zen.* III 59454 (III BC) ends as follows: “Know that you are disgusting (ἄτοπος) - - and this I am not the only one to say it, but [all] people in town. Such an everybody’s friend (πασίφιλος) you are”. Similarly, when Apollonios no longer believes the dreams of his brother the katochos Ptolemaios, feeling deceived by him and by his gods, he addresses his angry letter on the back “to those who speak the truth” (*UPZ* 1 70 verso; mid-second cent. BC)³⁹. In *SB XXII* 15708.41 the words “excellent (χρησιμὸς) Heraklas” are followed by a curse formula, which clearly shows that Heraklas is the opposite of excellent. In *SB XXVIII* 17112 Sosianos clearly has a stormy relationship⁴⁰ with Aspidous, who has left Maximianon in anger (ἐν ὀργῇ); in this context the words τὰ καλὰ ῥήματα (l. 5: “I remember your kind words when you were leaving”), τὸ καλὸν σου ἦθος (“your nice character”, l. 9) and τὰς χάριτάς σου ὑπερφυ[εῖς] (“your exceptional charms”, l. 15) should perhaps be understood ironically (note the repetition). The most famous example of irony is the letter of the boy Theon to his father (text 4.4), starting with the expression καλῶς ἐποίησας, “you did well by not taking me”, which he uses ironically.⁴¹ In fact, the boy is awfully angry because his father did not take him on his trip to Alexandria. This is one of the

³⁹ This is, by the way, one of the very few instances where the word αἰσχύνη “shame” is used. In general, papyrus letters hardly show a sign of ‘shame culture’. One interesting example is found in *SB I* 4317.25, where a husband complains to his estranged wife γεγύμνωμαι καὶ ὕβρισμαὶ παρὰ πάντων τῶν συνπολιτῶν (ca. AD 200; “I am stripped naked and insulted by all the fellow citizens”).

⁴⁰ “Une relation orageuse” according to the editor in Cuvigny (2003) 464.

⁴¹ In *P. Sakaon* 55.2-3 καλῶς ἐποίησας is similarly used ironically, as is clear from its repetition by κακῶς ἔλαβας in l. 14.

most emotional letters preserved on papyrus, but it would never have been reached by a computer word search. How then do we recognise it?

Emotions are often expressed by the repetition of words⁴², in the case of Theon especially of negations (καλῶς ἐποίησας οὐκ ἀπενέγκας με μετ' ἐσοῦ εἰς πόλιν. εἰ οὐ θέλεις ἀπενεγκεῖν <με> μετὰ σοῦ εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ μὴ γράψω σοι ἐπιστολὴν οὔτε λαλῶ σοι οὔτε ὑγιαίνω σε, εἴτα ἂν δὲ ἔλθῃς εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ μὴ λάβω χειρὰ παρὰ [σ]οῦ οὔτε πάλι χαίρω σε), and also the repetition of the pronoun 'you' in this case (for translation see text 4.4 below). Negations are similarly repeated by Aurelius Zoilos in an angry letter to Diogenes οὐκ εἰμι ἀπονεινομένος καὶ οἴκῳ εἰμι ἀναίσχυντος καὶ οὐκ [εἰ]μι μῦς, "I am not stupid and I am not without shame and I am not a mouse".⁴³ In *SB* X 10557, a letter where Fuscus starts addressing his correspondent Sarapion as "a real fool" (ἀληθινὸς μωρός) because he did not come to meet him as ordered, the word ἀναπλέω is repeated four times in eight short lines. Even more angry (and impatient) is another Diogenes when he writes "ten thousand times I have written to cut down (ἐκκόψαι) the vines at Phai. Today again I get a letter from you asking what I want done. To which I reply: ἔκκοψον, ἔκκοψον, ἔκκοψον, ἔκκοψον. There you are, I say it again and again (ἰδοὺ πλειστάκις λέγω)".⁴⁴ Note the duplication intensifying verbs of emotion λίαν λίαν ἀσπάζεται and λίαν λίαν χαίρω in *P. Mich.* VIII 482.10 and 23. In *BGU* III 948.7-10 there is a threefold repetition of οὐκ ἐτόλμησας and in *P. Laur.* II 42 (text 4.9 below) the expression ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι ὑμῶν is repeated twice and the infinitive συναβέσθαι even three times (II. 2, 6 and 7). This letter ends with three expressive intensifying adverbs πάννυ ἐλυπήθην καὶ λυπούμεθα πάννυ σφόδρα.

SB XVIII 13867 (text 4.3 below) illustrates how emotions can be retraced by word searches and also how positive and negative feelings alternate: the writer defends himself against a reproachful letter of his mother and sister: μέμφεσθε ὡς ἁμαρτήσαντά [με] (the first two lines clearly show the women cannot read!). At the same time he counterattacks (I. 17 μέμφομαι δὲ ὑμᾶς, I. 94 ὀργίζομαι), invoking the gods (I. 9 ὁμνύω τοὺς θεοὺς πάντας, I. 40 μὰ τοῦ<ς> θεοῦς, I. 55 μὰ τὸν Σάραπιν<ν>),

⁴² The same point is made by Kotsifou (2012a) 68.

⁴³ *P. Iand.* VI 97 = Tibillett (1979) no. 2 (AD 242-257).

⁴⁴ *P. Oxy.* XLII 3063.3-9 (AD II). If impatience can be considered an emotion, letters stressing urgency (and the use of εὐθύς or ὡς τάχιστα) would merit a study of their own. Impatience is especially common when superiors address inferiors, cf. Clarysse (2017). A recent example is *O. Did.* 333 (AD 88-92): ἤδη σοι δεκάκις εἶρηκα ("I told you ten times!").

pointing out his own problems (twice ἐλυπήθην in ll. 40 and 45, ἐγὼ ἀγωνι<άσ>ας l. 70) and stressing the theme of never-ending friendship (ἡ αὐτὴ γὰρ φιλία μένει, l. 49). Again the repetition of negations adds to the emotional weight (l. 18 οὔτε δι[ιὰ λ]όγων οὔτε διὰ γραμμ[ά]των; ll. 55-56 οὐ μὰ τὸν Σάραπι<ν> οὐκ [ἔ]σχισα· οὐ γάρ εἰμι ἀμαθής; ll. 91-92 ἱλαρὸς ἐγενάμην ὅτι οὔτε ἀσθενεῖ οὔτε ἔχει τι αὐτὴν πονηρόν). In *SB* IV 7354 (AD II) Sempronius reproaches his son Gaion that he has not taken service in the fleet and caused him two days of sorrow (ἐποίησα δύο ἡμέρας λυπούμενος). He even threatens that he will no longer consider him his son (οὔκετι ἔση μου υἱός) if he continues being disobedient, but in between he flatters Gaion saying that he “easily surpasses his brothers” (ῥά[διο]ν εἰς τ[οὺς ἀ]δελφούς σου διαφορὰ[ν ἔ]χεις καὶ ὑπεροχὴν).

Stress can also be added by accumulating synonyms, e.g. φόβου καὶ ἀγρυπνίας (*BGU* VIII 1764.9; 100-30 BC), ἀγρυπνῶ καὶ πεφόβημαι (*BGU* VIII 1766.9; 90-30 BC), ἐρωτῶ καὶ παρακαλῶ (*BGU* XLI 141.9-10, 13 BC; *O. Did.* 410, ca. AD 115-120), ἀγαπῶ καὶ τιμῶ σε (Cuvigny 2003, p. 494; AD 75-125), λυποῦμαι καὶ ἀλγῶ (*P. Iand.* VI 111.20; AD I-II), μέλλεις εὐφραίνεσθαι καὶ ἐξαλλάσσεσθαι (*P. Mich.* III 202.9-10; AD 105; translated by the editor as “you will find joy and pleasure”), ἐλυπήθην καὶ ἐκλαυσα (*P. Oxy.* I 115; AD II), πάνυ ἐμεγαλύνθην καὶ ἡγαλλίασα (*P. Oxy.* XII 1592.3-5; AD II-III), κλαίω καὶ θλιβόμενος ἔγραψα ταῦτα (*SB* VI 9616 Ro. 9; AD 550-560), ἀνοιμῶξαι καὶ κλαῦσαι (*P. Rainer Cent.* 70; AD III), στοργὴ καὶ ἀγάπῃ (*P. Oxy.* XXXI 2603.19; AD IV), ἐν πολλῇ μερ<ί>μνη καὶ θλίψει ὑπάρχω (*P. Amh.* II 144.17; AD V), οὔτε τὰς νύκτας κοιμῶμαι κλαίω καὶ εὐχόμενος καὶ παρακαλῶν τὸν θεόν (*P. Lond.* III 1244.6-7; AD V-VII). Hendiadys, a common figure of style in Hellenistic and Roman prose, is especially popular in the later period, perhaps under the influence of the contemporary literary style.

Two well-educated writers even use a polyptoton, a literary figure of speech whereby the same word is used in different forms⁴⁵. In *P. Oxy.* XLVIII 3409.21 (AD IV) μωρὰ μωροῖς (λέγειν) is apparently a proverbial expression, whereas κακὸς κακῶς in *SB* XXII 15708.41 (about AD 100), used by an advanced student in Alexandria, is common in classical prose and comedy (see the comments of Rea [1993] 85). The latter expression is also found in *P. Warren* 13.17-18 (AD II): κινδυνεύσω κακὸν κακῶς ἀπολέσθαι.

⁴⁵ See Lausberg (1990) 325-329.

A typical expression of emotion are superlatives and intensifiers such as ‘always’, ‘never’, ‘on all occasions’, ‘day and night’. More often than not χαίρω, αγωνιῶ, λυποῦμαι and the other verbs of emotion are preceded by intensifying adverbs like πάνυ (27 instances),⁴⁶ λίαν (22 instances),⁴⁷ μεγάλως (12 instances),⁴⁸ more rarely σφόδρα.⁴⁹ For that reason I added a field to the database listing ‘superlatives and other words of intensification’, such as τοσοῦτος, τηλικούτος, μία, οὐδείς, πολλά, πάντοτε and πᾶς, but also for expressions as οὐχ ὥς ἔτυχεν ἀγωνιῶμεν (*P. Petrie* III 53.16; 250-200 BC; similarly in *P. Bad.* 48.10), οὐχ ὥς ἔτυχεν ἀγανακτήσῃς (*BGU VIII* 1881.5-6; AD I-II) or καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν βεβαρημένοι (*P. Tebt.* I 23; 119 BC). Litotes also functions as a kind of superlative, e.g. οὐκ ὀλίγως ἀγωνιῶ (*P. Wisc.* II 84 l.25 and *O. Krok.* 93; AD II), οὐκ εἰς ὀλίγην ἀγωνίαν ἐνέβαλές με (*P. Oxy.* LXVII 4627 l. 5; AD III), οὐκ ὀλίγη ἀθυμία (*P. Oslo* III 159 l.18; AD III), οὐκ ὀλίγως λυποῦμαι (*P. Haun.* II 21; AD III-IV), ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ ποιήσας ἡμᾶς οὐ τῇ τυχοῦσῃ (*P. Oxy.* LXXIII 4959 ll.5-6; AD II), οὐ μέτριος φόβος (*P. Petrie* III 42 H 8 = *P. Petrie Kleon* 1; ca. 250 BC), οὐ μικρῶς ἀγωνιῶ (*P. Herm.* 11.13; AD IV), οὐκ ὀλίγως ἐσκοτώθη (*SB XIV* 11882 l.3-4; AD IV-V), οὐ μετρίως φροντίζω (*SB I* 4323; AD IV-VI). Clearly pathos and stress increase with time and come more to the fore in the Byzantine period.

When collecting the evidence and especially when collecting the most emotional letters, I was struck by the prominent position of women. In the whole corpus there are 300 male writers and 309 male addressees vs. 73 female writers and 72 female addressees. Women therefore constitute about 20% of our subjects. This is a lot, especially since most women were not able to write or read. Of the nine ‘typical’ texts in the anthology

⁴⁶ Especially common with χαίρω and ἡδομαι (see above n. 27-28), but also with negative verbs, e.g. θαυμάζω (*P. Grenf.* 2 II 77.8-9; *P. Neph.* 7.4), θλίβομαι (*P. Amst.* 95; *P. Köln* II 111.5), λυπέομαι (*P. Oxy.* LV 3819), μεριμνάω (*CPR V* 25; *P. Oxy.* LVI 3871 and 3873) and ὀλιγορέω (*P. Oxy.* LVI 3873; *SB XVIII* 13762.4). In text 4.9 below we even find the accumulation πάνυ ἐλυπήθην καὶ λυπούμεθα πάνυ σφόδρα (AD IV-V).

⁴⁷ Eleven instances with positive verbs, mainly χαίρω and ἡδομαι, 12 with negative, e.g. ἀγωνιάω (*SB XVIII* 13591.10), βαρύνομαι (*P. Teb.* I 23; *P. Oxy.* II 298), δάκνομαι (*SB I* 4630), λυπέομαι (*P. Oxy.* XIV 1676.10; *SB III* 6265), μέφομαι (*P. Mert.* II 81; *SB XIV* 11853).

⁴⁸ Again with positive verbs, like χαίρω and εὐχαριστῶ (*SB III* 6823.17-18; AD I), and with negative expressions, e.g. ἀγωνιάω, ἀθυμῶ (*P. Lond.* VI 1914.29; AD IV), μέφομαι (*P. Fay.* 111 and 112.14; AD I). In *SB III* 6823 ἐχάρην μεγάλως and μεγάλως μοι μέλει καὶ κήδομαι are used side by side, similarly in *P. Oxy.* LV 3807 (AD I) one finds μέφομαι μεγάλως (l. 34) alongside χαίρω μεγάλως (l. 43).

⁴⁹ *P. Col.* XI 301.4 (σφόδρα χαίρω) (AD IV) and text 4.9 below.

below, five were written by women and two (4.2 and 4.3) are addressed to women. Only two are male only, that of the boy Theon to his father (4.4) and 4.9, which is not truly a private letter. The most emotional letters are either written by women (including even two threats of suicide⁵⁰) or addressed to women. This prominence is no doubt due to the role of mothers and wives as persons of trust within the family. When sons or husbands travel abroad the women usually stay at home and receive the letters found in excavations in Egypt. It is surprising therefore that women writers are nearly as common as women addressees. In some cases the men kept the letters sent to them by their family and brought them back home, e.g. in the archive of the strategos Apollonios. But perhaps Greco-Roman women had more freedom of movement than we usually think. Or did women really express their emotions more freely than men⁵¹?

4. A SMALL ANTHOLOGY

4.1. *P. Giss.* 19 = *CPJud* 436

From Hermopolis to Apollonos polis Heptakomias about AD 117

- [Α]λίνη Ἀπολλωνίῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ
πολλὰ χαίρειν.
Μεγάλως ἀγωνιώσα περὶ σοῦ διὰ τὰ ὄν-
[τα] τοῦ καίρου φημιζόμενα καὶ ὅτι ἐξ-
5 [απί]νω⁵² ἐξ[ί]ηλθες ἀπ' ἐμοῦ. Οὔτε πο-
[τοῖς] οὔτε σειτίοις ἡδέως προσέρχομαι
[ἀλλὰ] συν]εχῶς ἀγρυπνοῦσα νυκτὸς ἡ-
[μέρας μ]ίαν μέριμναν ἔχω περὶ
[τῆς σωτ]ηρίας σου. Μόνη δὲ ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς
10 [μου πολ]υθρία ἀνεγείρει με.

Aline to Apollonios her brother, many greetings. I am greatly worried about you because of what they say about the present situation and because you went suddenly away from me. I do not touch with pleasure

⁵⁰ *PSI* III 177.8-10 (= text 4.5) ("if he dies in your absence - - - you may find me hanged"); *P. Petaus* 29 (AD II) ("my daughter wrote me saying: if she goes on for a month to treat me like this, I will throw myself in the sea").

⁵¹ Cf. also, for letters of condolence, Kotsifou (2012c) 402-404.

⁵² Previous editors read ἐξ[αίφ]νω⁵². Both ἐξ[αίφ]νω⁵² and ἐξ[απί]νω⁵² are addenda lexicis for ἐξ[αίφ]νης and ἐξ[απί]νης/ ἐξ[άπι]να. In contemporary letters, however, ἐξ[απί]νης/ ἐξ[άπι]να is used several times with verbs of "go away", e.g. in *O. Did.* 338 and 368, *P. Fuad Univ.* 6, *P. Mich.* VIII 506, *SB XXII* 15454.

neither food nor drink, but I am continually sleepless day and night, having just one anxiety about your safety. Only my father's care keeps me on my feet.

4.2. *P. Oxy.* III 528 = Hunt & Edgar (1932) no. 125; Hengstl (1978) no. 88

Oxyrynchus

AD 100-199

- Σερήνος Εἰσιδώρα [τῇ ἀδελ-]
 φῇ καὶ κυρία πλεῖστα χαίρειν].
 πρὸ μὲν παντὸς εὖχομαι[αἰ σε ὑγιαί-]
 νει<ν> καὶ καθ' ἐκάστης [ἡμέρας] κα[ῖ]
- 5 ὁψ<ί>ας τὸ προσκύνημά σου ποιῶ
 παρὰ τῇ σε φιλοῦσῃ Θοήρι. γινώσκειν
 σε θέλω ἀφ' ὧς ἐξηλθες ἀπ' ἐμοῦ
 πένθος ἡγούμην νυκτὸς κλαίων
 ἡμέρας δὲ πενθῶ<ν>. ἰβ Φαῶφι ἀφ' ὅτε
- 10 ἐλουσάμην μετ' ἐσοῦ οὐκ ἐλουσάμην
 οὐκ ἤλειμ<μ>αι μέχρι ἰβ Ἀθύρ, καὶ ἔπεμ-
 ψάς μοι ἐπιστολὰς δυναμένας λίθον
 σαλεῦσαι, οὕτως οἱ λόγοι σου κεκίνη-
 κάν με. αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἀντέγρα-
- 15 ψά σοι καὶ ἔδωκα τῇ ἰβ μετὰ τῶν
 σῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἐσφραγισμένα.
 χωρὶς δὲ τῶν σῶν λόγων καὶ γρα-
 μ<μ>άτων ὁ Κόλοβος δὲ πόρνην με πεποί-
 ηκεν, ἔλεγε δὲ ὅτι ἔπεμψέ μοι φάσιν
- 20 ἢ γυνή σου ὅτι αὐτὸς πέπρακεν τὸ ἄλυ-
 σίδιον καὶ αὐτὸς κατέστακέ με ε[ῖ]ς τὸ
 πλοῖον· τούτους τοὺς λόγους λέγεις ἵνα
 μηκέτι πιστευθῶ μου τὴν ἐνβολ[ή]ν].
 ἰδοὺ ποσάκις ἔπεμψα ἐπὶ σέ. ἔρχῃ [εἴτε]
- 25 οὐκ ἔρχῃ δῆλωσόν μοι.

verso: ἀπόδος Εἰσιδώρα π(αρὰ) Σερήνου.

Serenus to Mrs. Isidora, his sister, very many greetings.
 Before all else I pray for your health, and every day and evening I make supplication on your behalf before Thoeris, who loves you.
 I want to inform you that ever since you left me I have been in mourning, weeping by night and lamenting by day. Since I bathed with you on Phaophi 12 I have not bathed nor anointed myself until Hathyr 12. You have sent me letters that could move a stone, so much have your words stirred me. On the very instant I wrote an answer to you and delivered it on the 12th sealed up along with your letters. Apart from

what you say and write ‘but Kolobos has made me a prostitute’, he said to me ‘your wife sent me word saying “he himself sold the chain and he himself put me in the boat”’. Do you say these things in order that I may no longer be trusted as to what I put on board? See how many times I have sent for you. Let me know whether you will come or not.

verso: Deliver to Isidora from Serenus.

4.3. *SB XVIII 13867*

provenance unknown

AD 125-175

- 1 ὁ ἀναγινώσκων τὸ ἐπιστόλιον,
 τίς ἂν ἦς, κοπίασον μικρὸν καὶ μεθερμή-
 νευσεν ταῖς γυναιξὶ τὰ γεγραμμένα
 ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ ταύτῃ καὶ μετάδος.
 5 Πτολεμαῖος Ζωσίμη τῇ μητρὶ καὶ
 Ῥοδοῦτ[ι] τῇ ἀδελφῇ χαίρειν.
 μέμφεσθε διὰ γραμμάτων κ[αί] διὰ
 ἀνθρώπων ὥς ἁμαρτήσαντά [με, ἵ]να
 ὁμνύω τοὺς θεοὺς πάντας μὴδὲν
 10 τῶν λελαλλη/μένων πεπρακένα[ι]
 εἰ <μῇ> μόνον περὶ τοῦ ὄνου Καρᾶτος.
 ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐφάνητέ με καιρο[τηροῦσαι]
 καὶ εἰ ὀργή τις ἐνὶ ἐν τῷ με [μὴδὲν]
 παραπ[έμ]ψασθαι ἀκούσαντ[α, ἰδοῦ]
 15 ἐπλήγην ὑπὸ ἵππου κ[αί] ἐκινδύ-
 νευσα τὸν πόδα ἀπολ[έσαι ἢ καὶ]
 τὸ ζῆν. μέμφομαι δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτ[ι]
 οὔτε δ[ιὰ λ]όγων οὔτε διὰ γραμμ[ά-]
 των ἐπεσκέψασθέ με. θεῶν
 20 γὰρ θ[ε]λό[ν]τω[ν] ἔχοι ἂν καλῶ[ς]

 40 μὰ τοῦ<ς> θεοῦς, [. . .] ἐλυπήθην ἀκ[ού]σας
 [ποῦ] ἀπὸ τοῦ μικ[ροῦ] χαλκοῦ
 [ἴχ]θη. ἡ δὲ Ῥοδοῦς [- ca. ? -] .δ
 [- ca. ? -] . εἰς τὴν πέμπτην καὶ
 [εἰκ]οστὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα
 45 [μὴ ἀ]ναβῆς, ἐλυπήθην. προ-
 τρέπομαί σε δὲ ἀναβῆναι
 [εἰς] τὴν ἑβδομηκοστὴν
 τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀναβῆναι παρ’ ἐ-
 μέ ὥς εἰς τὰ ἴδια. ἡ αὐτὴ
 50 γὰρ φιλία μένει. πρότρεψαι

- [δ]ὲ καὶ τὴν πρεσβυτέραν
 [ἀ]ναβῆναι. περὶ τῆς ἐπισ-
 [τολ]ῆς ἧς μοι ἐπέμψατε,
 [οὐ] κοιμισάμενος εἶπε
 55 ὃ δε· οὐ μὰ τὸν Σάραπι<ν> οὐ-
 κ [ἐ]σχισα· οὐ γάρ εἰμι ἀμαθής.
 - - -
 65 καὶ αὐτὴ γὰρ ἀγνωμονεστάτη ἐστί. ἀπῆσθα γάρ μου ἐφ' ἡμέρας
 70 τέσσαρες ἐγὼ ἀγωνι<άσ>ας, μήποτε ἡσθένησε ἢ ἄλλο τι πέπονθε,
 ἔπεμψά
 75 μου τὴν ἀδελφὴν προφάσει τοῦ Καρᾶ. πυνθανόμενος περὶ τῆς σωτη-
 ρίας
 80 αὐτῆς ἀπέφηνα τὸ πᾶν. Ἀμμώνιος ὁ ἀδελφός [αὐ]τῆς <εἶπε> τῇ
 85 ἀ[δε]λφῇ μου ὅτι ἀπεδήμησε. ἀκούσας οὖν ὅτι ἀπεδήμησε ἰλαρὸς
 90 ἐγενόμην ὅτι οὔτε ἀσθενεῖ οὔτε ἔχει τι αὐτὴν πονηρόν· ὀργίζομαι δὲ
 95 ὅτι οὐκ ἀπετάξατό μοι ἀλλὰ ἄνευ μοῦ ἀπεδήμησε. πλὴν οὐδὲν ξένογ
 100 τῆς ἀγνωμοσύνης αὐτῶν. ἐ[γὼ] γὰρ ἤθελον πᾶν ὑμῖν πέμψαι.
 105 ἐρρ[ῶ]σθαι ὑ[μ]ᾶς εὖχομαι..

Whoever you are reading this letter, make a small effort and translate to the women what is written in this letter and tell them.

Ptolemaios to his mother Zosime and his sister Rhodous, greetings.

You blame me through letters and people that I have done wrong, so I swear by all the gods that I have done nothing of what has been said, except only about the donkey of Karas. But you appeared to be lying in wait for me. And if you are angry because I did not send anything though I had heard, the reason is that I was kicked by a horse and was in danger of losing my foot [or even] my life. I blame you because you greeted (!) me neither by word nor by letters. The gods willing it would be good - - - [40] By the gods, I was distressed when I heard [where he was brought] for this small [amount of money]. Rhodous - - for the twenty-fifth (day) of the god so that you did not come up, I am sorry. I entreat you to come for the seventieth (day) of the god, to come to me as to your own home. For the same friendship remains. Entreat also the old woman to come. Concerning the letter you sent me I have not received it and he(?) said : 'By Sarapis, I did not tear it up, for I am not stupid. - - -

[65] - - She is very unfeeling indeed. For you were away from me for four days, whereas I was worried lest she was ill or had experienced some other trouble. I sent my sister using Karas as a pretext. Learning that she was in good health, I revealed the entire matter. Ammonios her brother said to my sister that she had gone away. When I heard she had gone away, I was glad that she was not ill and that nothing bad had happened to her. But I am angry that she did not bid me good-bye, but went away without (talking to) me. But there is nothing strange in their lack of good sense. For I wanted to send you everything.

I pray that you are in good health.

4.4. *P. Oxy. I 119* = Hengstl (1978) no. 82

Oxyrhynchus

AD 150-250

- Θέων Θέωνι τῷ πατρὶ χαίρειν.
 καλῶς ἐποίησας οὐκ ἀπενέγκας με μετ' ἐ-
 σοῦ εἰς πόλιν. εἰ οὐ θέλεις ἀπενεγκεῖν <με> με-
 τὰ σοῦ εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ μὴ γράψω σοι ἐ-
 5 πιστολὴν οὔτε λαλῶ σοι οὔτε ὑγιαίνω σε,
 εἴτα ἂν δὲ ἔλθῃς εἰς Ἀλεξάνδριαν οὐ
 μὴ λάβω χεῖρα παρὰ [σ]οῦ οὔτε πάλι χαίρω
 σε λοιπόν. ἂν μὴ θέλῃς ἀπενέγκαι μ[ε]
 ταῦτα γίνεται. καὶ ἡ μήτηρ μου εἶπε Ἄρ-
 10 χέλῳ ὅτι ἀναστατοῖ μὴ. Αἴρων αὐτόν.
 καλῶς δὲ ἐποίησας δῶρά μοι ἐπεμψας
 μεγάλα ἀράκια. πεπλάνηκαν ἡμᾶς ἔκε[ι]
 τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἵβ ὅτι ἔπλευσας. λοιπὸν πέμψον εἴ[ς]
 15 με παρακαλῶ σε. ἂν μὴ πέμψῃς οὐ μὴ φά-
 γω, οὐ μὴ πίνω· ταῦτα.
 ἐρρωσθαί σε εὖχ(ομαι).
 Τῦβι ιη.

verso: ἀπόδος Θεωνι [ἀ]πὸ Θεωνᾶτος νῖῶ

Theon to his father Theon, greetings.

It was a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you won't take me with you to Alexandria, I won't write to you a letter or speak to you or say goodbye to you. And if you go to Alexandria I won't take your hand nor ever greet you again. That is what will happen if you won't take me. Mother said to Archelaos: 'He upsets me! Take him away!' It was a fine thing that you sent me presents, great ones, beans. They have cheated us there on the 12th, when you have sailed off. Now send for me, please. If you do not send for me, I will not eat, I will not drink. There.

I pray for your health. Tybi 18.

verso: Deliver to Theon from his son Theonas.4.5. *PSI III 177* = Bagnall & Cribiore (2006) 280

Oxyrhynchus

AD 150-250

Ἰσιδώρα Ἑρμία τῷ κυρί[φ ἀδελ-]
 φῷ πλείστα χαίρειν.
 πᾶν ποιήσον, πάντα ὑπε[ρθέ-]

- μενος⁵³ ἔλθῃ αὖριον. τὸ π[αι-]
 5 δὴν νοσεῖ· λεπτὸν γέγον[εν· οὐκ ἔ-]
 φαγε, ς ἡμέραι δ' εἰσί· δ[. . .⁵⁴]
 μὴ ἀποθάνῃ σοῦ μὴ ὄν[τος ἐν-]
 θάδε. μάθε δὲ ὅτι, ἐὰν ἀ[ποθάνῃ]
 σοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὅδε φεῦγ[ε μὴ]
 10 με εὐρήσῃ ἀπαγχομέ[νην - ca. ? -]
 Ἑφαιστίων τοσοῦτοις [- ca. ? -]

Isidora to Mr. Hermias, my brother, many greetings.

Do everything you can to put everything off and come tomorrow: the child is sick. He has become thin and did not eat. It is already 6 days. [I am afraid (?)] that he die while you are not here. Be aware that if he dies in your absence, watch out lest Hephaestion finds that I have hanged myself.

4.6. *P. Petaus* 29

Ptolemais Hormou

AD 175-200

- Διδυμάριον Πανί[σ]κῳ τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ χαίρειν.
 πρὸ μὲν πά[ν]των εὐχομαί σε ὑγιαίνειν καὶ τὸ προσ-
 κύνη[μ]ά σου ποιῶ παρ[ὰ] τῷ κυρίῳ Πετεσοῦχῳ.
 ἐχάρην πολλὰ ἀκούσασα ὅτι ἐσώθ[η]τε μετὰ
 5 τῶν τέκνων ὑμῶν καὶ [π]ερίψημα ὑμῶν τὰ πα-
 ρελοτα. γίγνωσκεις σε [θ]έλω ὅτι ἡ θυγάτηρ μου
 κάκῃ παροχλεῖται ὑπὸ τῆς μητρός σου. ἔ[γ]ραψέ
 μοι γὰρ λέγουσα ὅτι ἐὰν ἔτι μῆνα οὕτω ποι-
 ῇσιν ἐχόνομά μου βάλλω ἐμαυτὴν εἰς θάλασ-
 10 σαν. τὰ νῦν οὕν/ γράφω σοι ἐπεὶ ὡς πατὴρ αὐτῶν/
 εἶ σύ. ἰδὲ τὸ ὄν τί ἐστιν; οὐκ ἐμέμψατο γὰρ τὸν
 ἀδελφόν σου μέχρι τούτου, ἀλλὰ λέγω μὴ ἐν-
 κακή[σῃ]. ἄσπασαι Ἀρπαλῖνον πολλὰ καὶ
 Ἑραῖδα καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν καὶ τοὺς σοὺς
 15 πάντες κατ' ὄνομα.

(hand 2) ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι.

⁵³ The aorist ὑπε[ρθέ]μενος is preferable to the present ὑπε[ρτιθέ]μενος (so editor), with numerous examples of πάντα ὑπερθέμενος followed by an imperative in private letters, e.g. *P. Hal.* 13.10-12, *P. Herm.* 11.16-17, *P. Lips.* I 107.7-8 (πάντα οὖν ὑπερθέμενος ἄνελθε); *P. Mich.* XVIII 769.3-5; *P. Oslo.* II 59 (πάντα ὑπερθέμενος ἦκε); *P. Oxy.* VII 1065.3-4 (πάντα ὑπερθέμενος ἔλθε).

⁵⁴ The supplement δ[έδια] is unlikely, though the sense “I am afraid that” must be right. The verb δέδια/δέδουκα is not attested in the papyri.

Didymarion greets Paniskos most honorable.

Before everything else I pray that you may be healthy and I make obeisance for you with our lord Petesouchos.

I was very glad when I heard that you were safe with your children and - - I want to inform you that my daughter is importuned badly by your mother. She wrote me, saying: 'If she behaves with me like this for another month, I will throw myself into the sea. I write this to you now because you are like a father to them. See, what is the truth? Thus far he did not blame your brother, but I say this fearing that he may maltreat her. Greet Harpalinos a lot and Herais and your children and all your people by name. I pray for your health.

4.7. *SB XVI 12326* = Bagnall & Cribiore (2006) 285

provenance unknown

AD 275-300

- Ἡλιοδώρᾳ \τῇ/ μητρί μου πολλὰ χαίρειν. εὖ-
τόνω[ς] πικραίνομαί σοι ὅτι οὐδὲ φάσεις [λαβεῖν]
διὰ γραμμάτων σου κατηξίωσάς με [ἄφ' ὅτε]
ἐξῆλθα ἀπὸ σοῦ. πολλὰ ἐντέτριπται μοι ὑπὸ
5 τῆς θυγατρὸς μου. εἰδὲ δὲ πόσον [ὀργίσασα]
τὸν σταθμοῦχον καὶ τοὺς γείτονας αὐτοῦ ἡγανά-
κτησε κατ' αὐτοῦ. ἐξέδυσέν με σύμπ[α]ν καὶ
ἤρκεν μου τὰ χρυσάφια καὶ τὰ ἐ[νώ]τια
καὶ ἔδωκέν μοι κον κ[ι]θῶνιν
10 ἵνα οὕτως ἐ[.] [. . .] ,ια δὲ διῆρα.
παρ[ακ]άλεσον [ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ τὸ]ν θεὸν ἵνα με ἐλεήσῃ.

Heliodora to my mother many greetings.

I am thoroughly exasperated with you because you did not even deem me worthy to receive news through a letter of yours since the time I went away from you. Many troubles have been inflicted upon me by my daughter. See how much she [annoyed] the landlord and our neighbours and then was vexed at him. She stripped me of everything and took away my gold jewels and my earrings and gave me a [worn?] tunic so that . . . Invoke god for me so that he may pity me.

4.8. *P. Grenf. I 53* = Wilck., *Chrest.* 131; Naldini (1968) no. 56; Bagnall & Cribiore (2006) 397

provenance unknown

AD 350-399

- Ἄρτεμις Σαραπίωνι <τῷ> καὶ Ἰσιδώ-
ρφ. γράφει·
15 ἐάν ῃς στρατιώτης καὶ ἀπόνοι-
αν φορεῖς. ὁ ἡγεμὼν δὲ τὰς ἀπο-

- νοίας ταχὺ ταπεινοῖ. γράφ[εις δὲ]
 ἡμῖν ὥς ἐχθαμβῶν ἡμᾶς, λέ-
 γων ὅτι ὁ ἡγεμὼν οὐ θέλει οἰκο-
 20 φθόρους. εἰ δὲ θέλεις τὰ πορνεύ-
 ματα τῶν θυγατέρων σου ἐξά-
 γειν, μὴ ἐμὲ ἐξέταξε, ἀλλὰ τ[ο]ῦ[ς]
 πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας,
 πῶς ἐξεπήδησαν αἱ δύο ⁹
 25 λέγουσαι ὅτι ἄνδρες θέλομεν
 καὶ πῶς εὐρέθη ἡ Λούκρα
 παρὰ τὸν μοιχὸν αὐτῆς, ποιοῦ-
 σα ἑαυτὴν <v> Γα<δ>ιτάναν, ἐξ ᾧν
 φθονοῦσιν ὅτι Σουχάρῳ αὐ-
 30 τὰ προστεθείκαμεν. ἐὰν ᾗν
 δὲ ὀνομάζειν περὶ γένου<ς>
 καὶ ταῦτα πάλιν φθάνομεν
 ἀποδειῖξαι τίς τίνος εὐγενέστε-
 ρός ἐστι. ἡμεῖς γὰρ οὐκ ἐ[γενό]-
 35 μεθα ἀπὸ δούλης γεννηθέντες.

Artemis wites to Sarapion also called Isidoros.

If you are a soldier, you are also crazy, but the commander will quickly put an end to your craziness. You write to us with the intention to amaze us, saying that the commander does not want people who ruin households. If you want to bring into the open the fornications of your daughters, do not question me, but the priests of the church, how the two of them leapt out saying “we want men!” and how Loukra was found beside her lover, making herself a courtesan. Therefore, they are full of grudge because we handed them to Soucharos. And if we are to be specific about family, again we can show first, who is of better birth than whom. For we are not born from a slave girl.

4.9. *P. Laur.* II 42

Oxyrhynchites

AD 350-450

recto

Θαυμάζω πῶς ἀκούσας ὅτι Τλήτης ναύτης ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι
 ὑμῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἡμέλησας αὐτὸν συνλαβέσθαι.
 Ὑποδεξάμενος γὰρ τὸν γόμον ἀπενεγκεῖν εἰς Βαβυλῶνα
 τὸ ἡμισυ σχεδὸν ἀνήλωσεν. Βοήθησον οὖν εἴτε διὰ σοῦ
 εἴτε ἀξιῶσει τοῖς διαφέρουσιν Μαξίμου ἢ Δόλιος αὐτὸν
 συνλαβέσθαι. Διακινεῖ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι ὑμῶν. Δύνανται
 δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ Ψαμμουρβ ἄγροικοι Δόλιος αὐτὸν συνλαβέσθαι.
 Μεθυστὴς γὰρ ἐστὶν καὶ κακῆς προαιρέσεως.

verso

Πάνυ ἐλυπήθην καὶ λυπούμεθα πάνυ σφόδρα διότι
ἐτόλμησας ποιῆσαι πράγμα τοιοῦτο Ἀθηᾷτι χριστιανῇ οὔσα.

recto: I wonder that you have heard that the sailor Tletes is in your parts and that you neglected to catch him. Having received the shipload to bring it to Babylon, he spent nearly half of it. Help therefore, either by yourself, or by asking the subordinates of Maximus or Dolis, to catch him. For he is moving around in your parts. The peasants of Dolis in Psammourb can catch him. For he is a drunkard and of bad character.

verso: I was very grieved and we are very very grieved that you, who are a Christian woman, dared to do such a thing to Atheas.

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THE CASE OF THE MISSING SENSE OF HUMOUR: THE HISTORIAN LIVY

In memory of my irreplaceable friend Leon Mooren,
who had a wonderful sense of humour.

Abstract: Orthodoxy dictates that the historian Livy had no sense of humour himself, never allowed one of his characters to tell a joke or to laugh, and never depicted a situation which might cause a laugh — or even a smile — in his readers. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the surviving quarter of his history, there are more than fifty cases of jokes made by his characters, humorous narrative (especially a sense of the ridiculous), and humorous comment by Livy (especially irony). To point up these revelations, there are a few cases where Livy omitted humour found in his sources. In bringing all this to light, may our understanding of the fully rounded personality of this towering literary figure be further enhanced in his anniversary year.

We are all told again and again that Livy had no sense of humour: “No touches of humour are to be found in the history,” claimed Robert Ogilvie; Livy had “little sense for the humorous and witty” according to Konrad Gries; “Livy’s history is almost notorious for its lack of humour,” advised Melvin Thomas.¹

It is possible to go even further. Ogilvie claimed that “Livy fails to appreciate the one [*sic*] witticism which does survive from his sources.”² Patrick Walsh even accuses Livy of suppressing the wit in his sources. He furthermore asserted that “nowhere in the *Ab Urbe Condita* is a distinguished Roman depicted as laughing aloud.”³ Patricians, although unnamed, are recorded as laughing — at plebeian candidates for the ‘consular tribunate’ (4.35.10). We turn next to 6.34.6: the two Fabiae are at home and a lictor knocks at the door. “The younger Fabia, being unused to this custom, went white; the other Fabia laughed (*risui sorori fuit*) at her sister, amazed at her ignorance.” It would be hard to imagine anyone in Rome at this time more distinguished than a member of the Fabian

¹ Ogilvie (1965) 4; Gries (1969) 388; Thomas (1994) 18. An extraordinary irony (a form of wit) cannot be passed over. Eugene de Saint-Denis (1965) wrote on the laughter and smile of the Latins, with a forceful preface on the refusal by some to accept that the serious Romans did laugh. We have chapters on the smile of Vergil, the malice of Ovid — then we pass straight on to the bitter humour of Juvenal. Livy is nowhere to be found.

² This is supposed to be 45.39.15, apparently an error for 17.

³ Walsh (1955) 371f.

gens.⁴ There is worse to come. In 193 some historians at least depicted Scipio Africanus meeting Hannibal at Ephesos, to rank great generals. Hannibal named himself after Alexander and Pyrrhos — at which Scipio laughed (*risum obortum Scipioni*) (35.14.11).⁵

There have been very rare attempts to give Livy a human face or to understand his personality more acutely. Luciano Canfora admitted that Livy did have a sense of humour, but offered one reference in evidence: Quintilian 8.2.18, where Livy quotes a teacher who advised his students to practise obscure style!⁶ Several commentators, as we shall see — Thomas, Lindsay Hall, Adele Scafuro — have analysed Livy's humour in particular episodes, sometimes in dark places. Walsh has attempted to treat the subject of Livy's sense of humour in his history as a whole, only to use examples even to accuse Livy of "distortion of the facts" and dehumanisation of leading characters.⁷ These charges are serious. There is, however, one very insightful study of Livy, mostly overlooked, which devotes some half a dozen pages to the matter: Leon Catin, *En lisant Tite-Live* (1944). The examples are given without any order, and many seem not to be very humorous, such as 'plays on words', but he alerts us to several cases easily missed. He wrote specifically of Livy's "boutades" (flashes of wit), his skill in slipping words into the narrative which make us smile because they allow us "to penetrate a character's familiarity". He concludes, however, by asserting that wit is rare in the surviving forty-five (*sic*) books.⁸

It will be useful, before we proceed further, to give some idea of what is meant by humour, already a matter of interest in classical times. Among famous definitions or explanations the first is that it expresses a feeling of superiority. This was suggested as early as Plato (*Philebos* 48-50) and Aristotle (*Poetics* 5.1449), not to forget Cicero (*de orat.* 2.236); it has been supported among moderns by Thomas Hobbes in his *Leviathan* and

⁴ The real joke here was pointed out by Louis de Beaufort (1738) 308.

⁵ Davina McClain has now very usefully collected examples of *ridere* and its compounds in Livy (twenty-one instances). Some have relevance here (as indicated below). On Fabia, 34, she stresses the "hierarchical differences between the two women" — but that concerns their *husbands*: they are sisters, reared in the Fabian household.

⁶ Canfora (1993) 172.

⁷ Walsh (1955) 374 and (1970) 78. It should be noted that almost all instances of Livy's humour are omitted in what is generally accounted the classical history of the Republic, De Sanctis (1907-1964), but his concept of history was notoriously serious. Corbeill (1996) has only incidental references to Livy.

⁸ Catin (1944) 139-145. These will be noted in their place.

Henri Bergson in his study of laughter.⁹ A second theory suggesting that it is the perception of incongruity, goes back to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3.2),¹⁰ and is also found in Cicero (*de orat.* 2.255)¹¹ and Horace (*Ars poetica*, init); modern adherents of this view include Immanuel Kant in his critique of judgement and Arthur Schopenhauer in his book on the will.¹² Incongruity can be taken so far that it results in total reversal of the normal. A third theory seems more modern: it defines laughter as relief, as Herbert Spencer in his famous essay on the physiology of laughter and Sigmund Freud in jokes and the unconscious.¹³ How could anyone imagine that these theories were exclusive?¹⁴ There are obviously many further possibilities. Humour is exaggeration or parody; or it is double entendre; or plays on words; or simply the absurd.

In a famous analysis, Mary Douglas attempted to capture the quintessence of humour: all jokes have “a subversive effect on the dominant structure of ideas.”¹⁵ There is one obvious example of this in Roman culture: Plautus. As Erich Segal pointed out, “the very foundation of Roman morality is attacked in word and deed on the Plautine stage ... subverting filial devotion, marital concord and respect for the gods.”¹⁶ The most basic definition of humour and wit was surely given by Arthur Koestler in a famous essay: it is “a type of stimulation that tends to elicit the laughter

⁹ Hobbes (1651) chap.6; Bergson (1900). Hobbes wrote that laughter is caused “either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves.”

¹⁰ On Aristotle and humour, see Beard (2014) 29-36, stressing the complexity of his views.

¹¹ Beard (2014) 117.

¹² Kant (1790), book 2, sections 332-6; Schopenhauer (1819), book 1. Kant, in fact, supported at least *three* theories: “Something absurd (something in which, therefore, understanding can of itself find no delight) must be present in whatever is to raise a hearty, convulsive laugh. Laughter is an affection arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing” (332) (relief). Roars of laughter follow “a knave or a fool getting a rebuff” (334) (*Schadenfreude*). In humour in a good sense, “everything is estimated in terms that go quite off the beaten track (a topsy-turvy view of things) and yet on lines that follow certain principles, rational in the case of such a mental temperament” (336) (transl. Meredith).

¹³ Spencer (1860); Freud (1905). The latter famously wrote of “displacement” (*Ver-schiebung*), deviation in thought (which is more the incongruous), but covered *every* category of humour: combination of words (“condensation”), word division, double entendre, puns, nonsense, allusion, comparison, cynicism, and the absurd.

¹⁴ Beard (2014) 39. One only has to realize the breadth of views of, for example, Kant and Freud (notes 12-13).

¹⁵ Douglas (1968) 367.

¹⁶ Segal (1987) 31.

reflex”(!).¹⁷ Modification is needed, however, since response to humour and wit can cover a very wide range, from hysterical laughter to a gentle smile.

A special note is required about irony. This is essentially the contrast between appearance and reality. What is said is, in fact, the opposite of what is meant. The real meaning is concealed, but some of the audience can see that. There is, however, a second element in the definition of irony: it contains a comic element.¹⁸ The Romans knew that. Cicero defines irony as “a choice variety of humour” in the discussion of *facetiae* (*de orat.* 2.270). It will transpire that irony was one of Livy’s favourite devices.

There is a fundamental distinction to be observed between two categories of humour. This has been pointed out in a fascinating discussion of Greek laughter by Stephen Halliwell: the difference between ‘playful’ and ‘consequential’ laughter. The former is marked by lightness of tone; autonomous enjoyment; psychological relaxation; and a shared acceptance of the self-sufficient presuppositions or conventions of such laughter by all who participate in it. Consequential laughter, on the other hand, is marked by, first, its direction towards some definite result other than autonomous pleasure (e.g. causing embarrassment or shame, signalling hostility, damaging a reputation, contributing to the defeat of an opponent, delivering public chastisement); secondly, its deployment of an appropriate range of ridiculing tones, from mild derision to the vitriolic or outrageously offensive; finally, its arousal of feelings which may not be shared or enjoyed by all concerned, and which typically involve some degree of antagonism.¹⁹

He points out that this distinction is vital in societies where there is great stress on praise and honour on the one hand and blame and disgrace on the other, and where there are major divisions between friends and enemies. These are salient features of Roman society. It will become apparent that Livy’s humour is capable of bridging the playful and the consequential.²⁰

In order to understand Livy’s possible sense of humour, it is necessary, however, to understand some of the conventions of Roman laughter. Most

¹⁷ Koestler (1993).

¹⁸ Muecke (1970) 34.

¹⁹ Halliwell (1998) 283.

²⁰ Lateiner (1977) provides vital data on the Greek historians. Laughter occurs twenty-eight times in Herodotus. The man who laughs most is Cambyses. Laughter is “almost a royal prerogative”, but is used by Herodotus as a signal of great disasters: it indicates *hubris*. Laughter occurs, understandably, only three times in Thucydides: 3.83.1, 4.28.5, 6.35.

attention has naturally been focussed on comedy and satire.²¹ Comedy obviously has little to do with Livy — but something to do, as we shall see. There is a discussion of humour in oratory, of course, in Quintilian (6.3.35-100), and oratory was a subject which Livy had studied. What we need most, however, is a prose writer of about the same era as Livy. Cicero is the obvious choice, author of speeches, letters and philosophical and oratorical dialogues. First the theory. There is a long discussion in the *de oratore* (2.216-290). Propriety or appropriateness was vital: one had to have regard for the person and the situation (221). Wit is inappropriate where people deserve great disgust (*odium magnum*) or deepest sympathy (*miserericordia maxima*) (238). One had to avoid stupidity (*insultitas*) and buffoonery (*scurrilitas*) in striving for comic effect (239). Jokes could be made about facts (and people) or words. Both categories are well known to Livy. Irony (*dissimulatio*) (269-273) was also very attractive to him. Most importantly, wit had to have a point (247). We might note in passing that Cicero quotes a joke which Livy uses (273): Fabius and Tarentum (no. 10).²²

There is a further discussion in the *de Officiis*, where Cicero speaks of “controlling the appetites”, because nature has brought us into the world for serious purposes (one can imagine Livy nodding in assent). There is, of course, room for jest, but it should not be extravagant or immodest, but refined and witty (*non profusum nec immodestum, sed ingenuum et facetum*). There were two kinds of jest: the coarse and indecent, and the refined and clever. The latter kind was suitable for even the most dignified (*gravissimus*) person (*Off.* 1.10-34).²³

An illuminating study of late Republican political humour, focussing on Cicero, has been provided by Anthony Corbeill.²⁴ He singled out four sources of his humour: the appalling ridicule of physical peculiarities, on the grounds that they revealed moral character (!), fun at the expense of surnames, attention literally to the mouth (*os*), which is closely associated with physical deformity as an indicator of character, and aspects of

²¹ Comedy has been studied, notably by Segal (1968), satire by Plaza (2006) and Rosen (2007), and occasionally humour in poetry, for example Connor (1987), and now Roman laughter in general: Beard (2014). She has three references to Livy (the same to Tacitus, but nothing on Sallust, so historians fare badly), but cites not one of his jokes. Her main categories of humour do not suit him: the orator, the stage, imperial society (although he lived most of his life under a monarchy), animal jokes, and joke books. She has humour of her own: the temple of Magna Mater on the Capitol (8).

²² There is no help for our purposes in the edition of *de oratore* by Leeman (1989) 3.172f.

²³ There is no help for our purposes in Dyck (1996) 264-268.

²⁴ Corbeill (1996).

effeminacy. There is a splendid analysis of one of Cicero's most hilarious speeches, the *pro Caelio* by Katherine Geffken.²⁵ She shows that he was much indebted to the themes of comedy (for example, fathers and sons), and indulged in ridicule and humiliation, innuendo and allusion, irony, inversion, incongruity, parody (Clodia as Medea), wordplay and prosopopeia, as well as much sexual double entendre. As for Cicero's letters, Gregory Hutchinson identified the essential humour here as shared laughter to indicate friendship. Cicero could make gentle fun of a friend's profession, his relations with leading politicians, even his literary style, and make black jokes about his own political difficulties ("heroic gaiety", "grief turned into laughter").²⁶

And one might recall Cicero's remark even in 53 on the parlous condition of the Republic: "I don't think a Roman who can laugh deserves the name" (*Fam.* 2.4.1). What, then, was Livy to say when he began writing twenty years later?

Surely the most apposite comparison with Livy would be other Roman historians. Of his predecessors save one, there are only pitiful fragments, but a check of some outstanding examples reveals little to laugh about. There is no humour detectable in the fragments of Fabius Pictor, or those of Licinius Macer. The severe old Piso, on the other hand, depicts Romulus indulging in a petit bourgeois joke about wine (8 Peter = 10 Chassignet; Beck and Walter = 13 Forsythe), and the famous laugh of Cn. Flavius when he outwitted the jealous *nobiles* (27 Peter = 30 Chassignet; Beck and Walter = 37 Forsythe).

There is, of course, a predecessor of Livy whose works survive: Sallust. In his two monographs one would not expect any light touches. The closest to humour are, in fact, two insults. Catiline describes the *novus homo* Cicero as a "lodger citizen" (*inquilinus civis*: *Cat.* 31.7), and Metellus tells Marius to wait to be a candidate for the consulship to stand with his adolescent son (*Jug.* 64.4) — which would require waiting about twenty years!

This discussion of the theory ancient and modern on humour arms us for an investigation of the thirty-five surviving books of Livy. The truth about Livy and humour can be uncovered only by a systematic analysis of the evidence. Livy's examples will be divided into four categories. First, jokes in speeches put into the mouths of his characters. These may

²⁵ Geffken (1973).

²⁶ Hutchinson (1998) 172-199. He in fact analyses only *three* letters: *Fam.* 7.18, *QF* 2.9, and *Fam.* 9.20.

have been found in his sources (and some he signals as such*), but given the very high regard in which his speeches were held in antiquity, they are more likely for the most part his own attempt to illustrate character or situation. The second category is the humorous embedded in the narrative, which probably derives for the most part from his sources. The third category is found after the speeches and the narrative are done with, when further comment or interpretation are added. That they are additional to speech and narrative can be simply demonstrated: they can be excised without the slightest effect on sense. The fourth category is not the least interesting, where we can compare Livy with his source (Polybios, of course) and detect jokes which he has passed over.

JOKES PUT INTO THE MOUTHS OF CHARACTERS IN THE HISTORY

1. The Romans were desperate for women and sent embassies to their neighbours asking for some, but were universally rebuffed. They were asked: "Have you opened an asylum for women: that is the only way to obtain some" (1.9.5)! This is sarcasm at the expense of the new city's heroes and its king.²⁷

2. Tullia speaks of her husband to (his) brother and of (her) sister to (her sister's) husband (*de viro ad fratrem, de sorore ad virum*: 1.46.6-7). Catin drew attention to the play on words.²⁸ The joke stems from the convoluted identification (using anaphora and anacoluthon) of seemingly two people, who turn out to be identical.

3. Tarquinius Superbus harangues the senators in abuse of Servius Tullius: he is a slave who had seized power without any observance of form (no interregnum, or election by the people, or senatorial confirmation) only *muliebri dono* (a woman's gift) (1.47.10). That was true — only ironically the woman who had ensured Servius' success was none other than Tarquin's own mother, and he owed his own throne to a determined woman, Tullia.²⁹

²⁷ Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 1.114: mockery. De Beaufort (1738) 176 is interested only in the historicity of the story; Dyer (1868) 68 regards the answer as an insult; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 1³.226f. is interested only in the historicity. Ogilvie (1965) 66f. notes no humour. Poucet (1967) 158 studiously avoids the matter.

²⁸ Catin (1944) 144. Ogilvie (1965) 184-186 is brilliant on the whole myth. Livy "has written his own tragedy".

²⁹ This speech is, not unnaturally, passed over by the modern histories, as well as the commentators: Ogilvie (1965) 191, and even by specialist works: Thomsen (1980).

4. Livy has the great *popularis* Manlius Capitolinus address his followers in a speech beginning *quo usque tandem ignorabitis vires vestras* (“How long, pray, will you be ignorant of your strength?”) (6.18.5). No educated Roman could fail to recognise these three words from the opening of Cicero’s *Catilinarians* (1.1): *quo usque tandem abutere Catilina patientia nostra?* Sallust had also parodied it by putting it into Catiline’s own mouth (*Cat.* 20.9)! This was noted by Robin Seager: “Livy, like Sallust, must have had a sense of humour.” Cicero’s high rhetoric has, in fact, been completely subverted.³⁰

5. App. Claudius (cos. 349) is fulminating in 368 against the idea of a plebeian consul, and religious taboos are being paraded. He quotes in disbelief the plebeians’ claim: what difference does it make if the sacred chickens do not feed (6.41.8)? This man was none other than the great-grandfather of the Claudius who at Drepana in 249 threw the sacred chickens who would not eat into the sea. Stephen Oakley alone understands: “no educated Roman reader would have missed the irony of these words.”³¹ The joke, despite reference to a serious Roman defeat (for a parallel, see no. 11), works at three different levels: (1) it concerns those experts in the chickens, the Claudii; (2) here it is a Claudius *upholding* this form of augury; (3) the echo is, in fact, an anachronism.

6. The famous Papirius Cursor was notoriously hard on his men. When his cavalry begged a reward for their success, an excuse from some duty, he replies: “In order that you may not say that I have remitted nothing, I excuse you from patting your horses backs when you dismount” (9.16.15-16)! This Catin included in “boutades”, Gries called it a “hardy jest”, and Oakley rightly describes as “grim humour”.³²

7. The consuls of 296, L. Volumnius and App. Claudius, were enemies. The latter was a famed orator, but in a debate Volumnius shows unexpectedly that he is a match for him. Appius jeers (*cavillans*) at him: this man who in his former consulship (307) was incapable of opening his mouth is now making speeches like a *popularis*. He has been transformed from

³⁰ Seager (1977) 383; Kraus (1994) 200 simply notes the borrowing; Oakley (1999-2005) 1.545f. notes the “compliment” to Cicero and Sallust. The 1970s saw much attention to the question of priority: Renahan (1976): Sallust parodies Cicero; Innes (1977): Sallust compliments Cicero; Malcolm (1979): Cicero parodies Catiline! In all this, Livy is barely mentioned.

³¹ Oakley (1999-2005) 1.711; Kraus (1994) 323 is deadpan. The story is omitted by Mommsen and by all the historians.

³² Catin (1944) 141; Gries (1949) 126; Oakley (1999-2005) 3.180. The incident is not listed by Kroll, *RE* XVIII (1949) 1039-1051.

a tongueless mute into a fluent speaker (10.19.7)! The sarcasm is indeed heavy. Only Friedrich Münzer detected the “mocking attack”.³³

8. In 216 Hannibal sent his brother Mago to report the victory of Cannae to the Carthaginian senate. He asked for reinforcements, grain and money. Hanno, the leader of the opposition, indulged in heavy sarcasm. “I have slain armies of the enemy. Send me soldiers. What would you have asked for if you had been defeated? I have captured two camps of the enemy, full of booty and supplies. Give me grain and money. What else would you beg if you had lost your camp?” Hanno went on to ask if any Latin state had revolted, or any Roman had deserted. In short, the Carthaginians were no further advanced than when the war began (23.12.13-16).³⁴

9. During the siege of Casilinum by Hannibal in 216, to show their disdain, the besieged, although actually eating leather and rats, sow turnips. Hannibal exclaims: “Am I to sit before Casilinum until these seeds come up?” (23.19.14). Commentators have written of Hannibal’s “shame and bitterness” and “exasperation” but it was humour, however black.³⁵

10. In one of the great sieges of the Hannibalic War which was so necessary to Rome’s victory, Tarentum was recovered in 209. Its fate is discussed in the senate with great dissension. One of the matters over which opinion is very divided is the role of M. Livius Macatus, in command of the garrison when the city revolted in 212, and who held out in the citadel for a year. Some senators are for punishing his incompetence. Among the others is Fabius Cunctator — not given to levity, one would have thought — who repeats what his friends said: without Livius having lost Tarentum, Fabius could not have recovered it (27.25.5)! This can be taken as either irony (Weissenborn-Müller), facetiousness (de Sanctis), sarcasm (Münzer), or a boutade (Catin).³⁶

³³ Münzer, *RE* IXA (1963) 881. Oakley (1999-2005) 4.219 notes no humour. The historians omit the story.

³⁴ The exchange is only reported in de Beer (1969) 218, and O’Connell (2010) 173, but not mentioned by De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2.204, Lazenby (1978), Caven (1980), or Bagnall (1990). Lenschau wrote of Hanno “criticizing” Hannibal (bemängelte) in *RE* VIII (1912) 2357, which completely misses the point. Catin (1944) 142 noted the sarcasm.

³⁵ Shame and bitterness: Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 4.3.49; exasperation: Lazenby (1978) 93. Omitted by Mommsen (1895) 2.304, Lancel (1998) 115, and Goldsworthy (2000). De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2² 227 declared details of the siege partly invented.

³⁶ Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 6.1.75; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².457.; Münzer, *RE* XIII (1927) 887; Catin (1944) 141. Lazenby (1978) 111 comments only on Livy’s initial coyness about his ancestor’s name.

*11. One of the consuls of 207, M. Livius Salinator, had been consul before in 219, following which he was condemned in court, fined for peculation although he had won a triumph, and withdrew from public life. In the crisis of the war he was forced to return to public life, and hastened to engage the enemy. Fabius warned him not to be hasty, to which he replied that he would either win a brilliant victory or have the pleasure of seeing his fellow citizens defeated (27.40.9). By any account this is an extraordinarily wicked reply, which counts as black humour.³⁷ This is the first of a number of these instances of humour in Livy where he indicates that he is only recording a tradition which he is not vouching for (they will be indicated by an asterisk).

12. In the debate in the senate in 205 over sending Scipio to finish the war in Africa, his opponent Fabius is given by Livy a long and patronising speech (28.40-42). We must remember that Scipio was little more than thirty, while Fabius was about eighty years of age and *Princeps Senatus*. In the course of this he recalls the panic in Italy when Hasdrubal crossed the Alps in 208: "He had been defeated by you; all the more do I regret ... that a passage into Italy was allowed to this defeated man" (*iter datum victo in Italiam esse*). Fabius continues: all Scipio's successes are to be credited to him; his failures are to be attributed, of course, to the uncertainties of war and of fortune (28.42.15). This is heavy sarcasm, making Münzer's judgement in example (5) look right, and providing a most interesting character trait in the old Roman.³⁸

13. One of the most discussed passages in Livy is the conference of Nikaia, 198/7. Livy's source here is Polybios, who revealed that both king Philip and Flaminius were capable of showing wit, despite the seriousness of the occasion. Polybios quotes Philip's first joke as revealing his style (*idioma*) and that he was made for scoffing. He ridiculed the poor

³⁷ This extraordinary exchange is generally omitted: Mommsen (1895) 2.247f.; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².471f.; Scullard (1951) 71; Lazenby (1978) 181; Errington (1989) 93. In Münzer (1999) 210 perhaps this episode is subsumed under "gilding of the tradition," but in *RE* XIII (1927) 895 he labels it an "unfriendly reply", and compares it with Paullus to Fabius (22.40.14) and stresses Fabius' part in Salinator's condemnation in 219 (without source). Epstein (1987) is interested only in relations between the two colleagues in 207. Catin (1944) 141 notes the boutade.

³⁸ The closest to a comment on this is De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².492f.: the opposition of Fabius to Scipio is certain, but the details are not. Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 5.2.256 note only the "bitter irony" of *patere*. The exchange is not discussed by Mommsen (1895) 2.352; Münzer, *RE* VI (1909) 1827; Scullard (1951) 75, (1970) 168; Lazenby (1978) 193f., who is worried about the authenticity of the speeches; Briscoe (1989) 63; Bagnall (1990) 269; Goldsworthy (2000) 286.

sight of Phineas (18.4.4). Livy reproduces that joke, and also comments that Philip was “more facetious than became a king” and did not maintain required seriousness (*erat decacior natura quam regem decet et ne inter seria quidem risu satis temperans*: 32.34.3). There were, then, two governors of decorum: rank and circumstances.

14. Nabis was threatened by the Romans and Greeks (195). He summoned the Spartans and admitted that some wished him harm. It would be, however, to their advantage, he assured them, to prevent that rather than punish them after the attempt. Eighty leading young men were arrested — and all killed the next night (34.27.6-8). This was a stunning mixture of cynicism and hypocrisy (Catin). Again, like no. 49, it is incongruity to the point of reversal: cruelty masquerading as kindness, absolutely black humour.³⁹

*15. Scipio Africanus *reputedly* met Hannibal at Ephesos in 193. One would never guess the topic of conversation: who was the greatest general! Hannibal names Alexander, then Pyrrhos, then himself. No wonder Scipio laughs (*risum obortum Scipioni*) — because although he had defeated Hannibal, he was not ranked. And what, Scipio asked, if Hannibal had defeated him? (35.14.5-12). The humour lies in the incongruity — one of the major categories of humour — and paradox. “Scipio’s laughter comes from his mistaken belief that Hannibal considered himself superior to Scipio” (McClain). His position slips even further in the revised list! The humour is heightened by the irony that Zama was a “close run thing”, hardly illustrative of Scipio’s military genius.⁴⁰ Commentators omit this example of humour in Livy, however, simply because they reject the authenticity of the event!⁴¹ Livy was perfectly aware of problems, but would not omit it.

16. In the prelude to the Antiochan war in 192 the Aitolian Archidamos addresses Flamininus. When had the Roman ever performed the functions of a commander, he taunted. While Archidamos had been exposing

³⁹ Catin (1944) 142. De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1.102-103 omits its brutality. Ehrenberg, *RE* XVI (1935) 1471-1482 at 1477 writes only of “brutal terror”, without details. Briscoe (1973-2012) 2.92-94 is interested only in the absence of anacoluthon.

⁴⁰ The main source is Polybios 15.9-14, whose account has been savaged; for a defence see Walbank (1957-79) 2.453-456. Scipio allowed his crucial cavalry to leave the battlefield, returning in the nick of time. I owe this nice point to one of the two readers.

⁴¹ McClain (2006) 38. Its authenticity is rejected by De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.2².128; Holleaux (1938-1968) 5.184; Scullard (1951) 198 (where Scipio smiles!); Briscoe (1973-2012) 2.166; Gruen (1984) 210. Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 8.1.24 thought that the ultimate source must be Polybios.

himself to the enemy (at Kynoskephalai), he had seen Flamininus taking auspices, sacrificing and performing vows like a poor priest (35.48.13)! This is more than “sharp personal invective” (Gundel), it is heavy sarcasm, which forms a fascinating contrast to the situation at Nikaia. Again, a Greek is shown indulging in improper behaviour in Flamininus’ presence.⁴²

17. In the war against Antiochos, Philip was on the Roman side. On the surrender of the king of Megalopolis, Philip greeted him as king and brother. Again Philip jests, and again Livy complains that this is inappropriate levity (36.14.4). Walsh refers to the king’s “sardonic sense of humour.”⁴³

*18. Scipio Africanus arranges the betrothal of his daughter without consulting his wife, Aemilia, who is naturally upset when she hears about it. She does not know the name of the young man, therefore, and declares that she should have been consulted, even if he were Gracchus (38.57.7)! The story is apocryphal, since the betrothal followed Africanus’ death, but again, aware of the problem, Livy cannot resist the irony.⁴⁴

19. Roman envoys come to meet Perseus on the Peneus river in 172. A discussion naturally arises over who should seem to show deference to the other by crossing the river. The Roman delegation is led by Q. Marcius Philippus (cos. 186, 169), who would have been born in 220s, while Perseus was born in 212. A joke by him settles the matter: “Let the younger cross to his elders, and the son [Perseus] to the father [Philippus].” This is a play on Marcius’ cognomen (42.39.5). Here a much older and more distinguished Roman than Flamininus is depicted by Livy jesting with the king against whom war is about to be declared.⁴⁵

*20. When the Rhodians were attempting to mediate in the Third Macedonian War, in 169, *some annalists* reported an answer from the

⁴² Gundel, *RE* XXIV (1963) 1087. The incident is omitted, for example, by De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.2².145, and Gruen (1984). Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 8.1.80 note the irony that Livy omits Archidamos at Kynoskephalai (cf. Polyb. 18.21.5). Liebeschütz (1979) 4 cites this case as an example of “Greek inability to understand Roman attention to the detail of religious ritual”!

⁴³ Walsh (1990) 92; Walbank (1940) 203: typical of Philip’s humour.

⁴⁴ Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 8.2.239 note only that custom seems to have required consulting the mother!. Scullard (1951) 195f., and (1970) omits the episode. Walsh (1993) 103 does not comment. Münzer, *RE* IV (1901) 1592, and Stockton (1979) 24 both stress that the betrothal was after Africanus’ death!

⁴⁵ Meloni (1953) 185 prefers to stress the amicable relations between Philippus and Philip. Gruen (1984) 412 has a long list of distortions in the account of the meeting — but not the joke. A boutade: Catin (1944) 142.

senate. It was high sarcasm. “The Romans are to take up and lay down their arms at the beck and call of the Rhodians. We are no longer to call on the gods to witness treaties, but rather the Rhodians. Unless obedience is rendered to them, the Rhodians will see, will they, what they must do!” (44.15.5). There has been modern argument over the date of this exchange, and the reliability of the annalists (mostly not accepted), because, as Walbank put it, it is “a tendentious account designed to blacken the Rhodian reputation”. That did not stop Livy seeing the humour in the encounter.⁴⁶

HUMOROUS NARRATIVE

21. Tarpeia demands from the enemy what they have in their left hands (*quod in sinistris manibus habent*). They crush her to death under their shields (1.11.6-9). Catin takes this as a play on words: double entendre: for what is on their left *arms*, Tarpeia understands the bracelets (*armillae*), the Gauls understand the shields.⁴⁷ As Weissenborn-Muller alone point out, however, the joke is also on Livy, who spoils the ambiguity by writing hands (*manibus*) instead of arms (*bracchis*)!⁴⁸ Note also the contrary version, making her a heroine, that what she really wanted were the *shields* (Piso).

22. In the Tarquins’ mission to Delphi, Brutus is taken along as a figure of fun (*ludibrium verius quam comes*). The oracle replies that *imperium* will be given to the first to kiss his mother. On returning home, Brutus falls and kisses the earth (1.56.9-12). Catin describes this only as “finer wit”, in contrast to no. 43 (Servilius’ groin).⁴⁹ It is double entendre (who is mother?), with elements also of Schadenfreude: the joke is on the Tarquins, and incongruity: the supposed fool is the wise man.

⁴⁶ Walbank (1957-1979) 3.350-351. De Sanctis (1907-1967) 4.1.343 stated that this is an anticipation of the embassy in 168, and that that the Rhodians would certainly not have used the language attributed to them by the annalists (and Livy here); Catin (1944) 142 noted the sarcasm; Briscoe (1973-2012) 4.511-512 is concerned with the corrupt text; cf. 677. Livy refers back to this embassy in 45.23.11.

⁴⁷ Catin (1944) 140. Pais (1905) chap.5 stresses the variant traditions. Ogilvie (1965) 74 concentrates on *armillae*. Gansiniec (1949) 21 notes that an “ambiguous condition in immoral contracts (is) a typical literary device”.

⁴⁸ Weissenborn & Muller (1889-1924) 1.122.

⁴⁹ Catin (1944) 141. Ogilvie (1965) 218 is most interested in comparing Hom. *Od.* 13.354. Parke (1939) 270-271 sees the various elements of the story as based on folklore, and stresses that the main question for the oracle (about the snake) is completely overlooked. The oracle was partial to mother jokes: cf. Ael. *VH.* 14.614.

23. The Romans have tunnelled under Veii, when a sacrifice is taking place above. The Etruscan haruspex declares that whoever should *cut out* the entrails of the sacrificed animal (*exta prosecuisset*) will gain the victory. The Roman burst out of the tunnel and *seize* (*rapere*) the entrails (5.21.8). This is not a play on words (Catin), but again a double entendre, if not a misunderstanding, which requires some knowledge of haruspical lore. Ogilvie explained: *rapere* is a synonym for *prosecare*, but the Romans take it in its basic meaning, to ‘seize’ — and act accordingly⁵⁰.

24. The treacherous Faliscan schoolmaster is rejected by Camillus, bound and given over to his students, who scourge him back to town (5.27). This is incongruity, in fact a total reversal (Catin): it is the schoolmaster who usually beats his students.⁵¹

25. An allied commander, a praetor from Praeneste, was slow bringing his men up to the line. Papirius Cursor walked to his tent, had him called out, and ordered the lector to prepare the axe. The praetor (*exanimis, perfusus metu*) expected to be executed, but Cursor simply told the lector to cut away an inconvenient tree root. Catin took this as a sally (*boutade*), but it fills many categories: Schadenfreude, reversal, relief.⁵²

26. In book nine, Livy relates a minor episode, on the grounds that it had religious significance. The flute-players went on strike and retired to Tibur. They were returned to Rome by a ruse. Given the musicians’ liking for wine (so says Livy), the Tiburtines got them drunk, bundled them into carts — like sacks — and drove them back to Rome. They awoke in the Forum, with a crowd standing round gaping at them (9.30.5). The implausibility of the story is compounded by the indignity — the Schadenfreude — of it. As Otto Seel noted: “wie anders als lachend lässt sich diese Geschichte erzählen?”⁵³

27. In the war against the Samnites in 293, Livy gave considerable space to the awesome ceremony of the enlistment of the ‘Linen Legion’, involving curses against the whole household of any soldier who fled. In

⁵⁰ Catin (1944) 141. Ogilvie (1965) 676. Niebuhr (1855) 2.479 expanded and spoiled: “whoever brought the goddess (Juno) her share of the slaughtered animal”; followed by Ihne (1871) 1.248. De Sanctis (1907-1964) 2.134 retells the story deadpan. Cornell (1989) 299 actually quotes the text.

⁵¹ Catin (1944) 139.

⁵² Catin (1944) 141.

⁵³ Seel (1960) 14. It is hard to detect any concern by Livy for dignity, pace Oakley (1999-2005) 3.398.

the sequential battle, however, Livy is precise: “sworn and unsworn fled alike” (10.41.10). This is Schadenfreude (Catin).⁵⁴

28. At the critical moment in his great victory over the Samnites in 293, Papirius Cursor, instead of vowing a temple to the gods, vowed to Jupiter that before he himself took *temetum* (an early word for wine, Gell. 10.23.1), he would give him a thimble of mead (*pocillum mulsi*) (10.42.7). We should note the context carefully. Livy specifies that there never was a happier or more confident general, and that it was customary to vow a temple in such circumstances (42.67), but that the gods seemed to be pleased with his vow. This was the man also who had disregarded the deceitful *pullarii* (40.9f). Understanding of this passage has oscillated wildly: Niebuhr thought Cursor was indulging in “scoffing unreservedly” — not a wise attitude. Benjamin Foster, the Loeb editor, dismissed the idea of mockery and saw “an hilarious expression of confidence and good understanding — not without a playful assumption of superiority as a toper.” Jupiter, at any rate, had a better sense of humour than Pliny, who cited the reference as evidence for old-fashioned abstemiousness (*NH* 14.91)! Togo Salmon took it to mean that “at the height of the action Papirius Cursor bragged that he could outdrink Jupiter,” which is obviously a total misreading.⁵⁵ A parody is obviously involved.

*29. In the prelude to the Hannibalic War Livy records total obstruction to the very distinguished Roman embassy sent everywhere: to Carthage, Spain and Gaul. It is, however, in the last that the obstruction was the most undignified. The Romans asked the Gauls to block Hannibal’s passage into Italy. The result was uproarious. The younger men are said to have gone out of control with laughter: fancy expecting them to bear the brunt of Hannibal’s attack (21.20.3)! Livy provides a most vivid recreation of the scene. This is incongruity: the self-important envoys talking of the greatness of Rome while in fact begging for help from the Gauls, whom they were mistreating.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Catin (1944) 138.

⁵⁵ Niebuhr (1855) 3.393; Foster (1926) 524; Salmon (1967) 272. Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 3.2.206 declare that the matter is a joke, but not mockery. Oakley (1999-2005) 4.432 notes that temples had been vowed in 295 and 294 by commanders, and that *mulsum* was a drink associated with triumphs.

⁵⁶ McClain (2006) 45-46 is instructive. De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².1f. and Briscoe (1989) 45 are not interested in the embassy beyond Carthage. Lazenby (1978) 50 is interested only in historicity.

30. The consul C. Flaminius (217), rejecting the advice of his war council to be patient while Hannibal was ravaging Etruria and to wait for his colleague, flung out of the council, and vaulted onto his horse: it fell, and he was catapulted straight over its head (*equus repente corruit consumemque lapsum super caput effudit*) (22.3.11). Lindsay Hall alerted us to this fine example of Livy's humour. The point is made all the clearer by the contrast with Flaminius' preceding speech with "appeals to fatherland and hearth and to historical precedent." Romans would certainly have seen the ridiculous here — at least if they shared Livy's prejudices against the hapless consul.⁵⁷

31. In 216, the consul-elect L. Postumius Albinus and his army perished in Gaul. The Gauls had set an ambush by cutting trees in a forest so that they would still stand, but could very easily be pushed over (23.24.7). Not the Gallic tree trick again! What educated Roman would not recall Caesar *BG* 6.27 — the only joke in Caesar's Gallic commentaries? Only Weissenborn-Müller draw attention to the Caesarian parallel.⁵⁸

32. The proconsul T. Sempronius Gracchus was fighting Hanno near Beneventum in 214, relying on slave volunteers. He recklessly promised each man his freedom if he brought in an enemy's head. The result was that when the battle was joined, the Romans faced disaster. Livy provides a vivid picture of any man who had slain an enemy being totally occupied cutting off the head, and then having to hold it in his right hand — instead of his sword (24.15)! The battle has descended into farce. Gracchus is forced to order his troops to throw away the enemy heads, and get on with the fighting.⁵⁹

33. The first of a number of less than flattering accounts of the Macedonian kings describes the flight of Philip from Apollonia in 214: "half naked, just as he was when awakened; inadequately clothed even for a

⁵⁷ Hall (1990) 346. The incident is studiously omitted by most moderns. Even Münzer, *RE* VI (1909) 2499 says only that Flaminius' horse "collapsed under him". One can only suspect that moderns either reject the incident as unhistorical, or regard reporting of portents as unworthy of a historian.

⁵⁸ Weissenborn & Müller (1880-1924) 4.3.60. No details of the ambush are given by De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.2.223 or Briscoe (1989) 53.

⁵⁹ Mommsen (1895) 2.335: "the slave legions distinguished themselves"; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2.249 is concerned only with the location; Münzer, *RE* IIA (1923) 1402 regarded the narrative as embellished but reliable; Briscoe (1989) 53: "Gracchus defeated Hanno"; best editing of all, "Gracchus' army, inspired by the offer of freedom, fought fanatically": Lazenby (1978) 102. Only Weissenborn & Müller (1880-1924) 5.1.36 saw the crux: how did the Carthaginians not win under these circumstances?

common soldier” (24.40.13). The king’s position is totally ignominious. His flight was, indeed, the culmination of his disorder: he was besieging Apollonia, but so carelessly that a Roman force could enter the city and then infiltrate the enemy camp at night with total ease. Every Roman reader would have laughed, or at least smiled.⁶⁰

34. Tarentum was captured by pro-Carthaginian elements in 212. When Hannibal broke into the city, all was in confusion. The Tarentines thought it was Roman treachery, the Romans thought it was an uprising by the people. All was supposed to be made clear by a trumpet signal from the theatre. The only trouble was, it was a Roman trumpet, furnished by the traitors (i.e. the pro-Carthaginian Tarentines), but “being blown unsuccessfully by a Greek, it was unsure who was giving the signal to whom” (25.10.4)!⁶¹ Again, the situation is farcical.

35. In the battle for morale in the Hannibalic War an incident occurred in 211 which revealed Hannibal’s sarcasm. He camped near Rome, when he learned from a prisoner that an auction had been held in Rome of the land on which he was camped — to show Roman contempt for the threat. He replied by auctioning the *tabernae argentariae* in the Forum (26.11.7)!⁶²

36. The censorship of M. Livius Salinator and C. Claudius Nero (204) has been analysed by Melvin Thomas to suggest that Livy depicts it in the light of comedy. At the *transvectio equitum* the censors deprived each other of their mounts, and then Livius reduced all but one of the tribes to the status of *aerarii*, that is, non-combatants — and this in 204. It made no sense for the censors to act unilaterally: they had to cooperate, having *par potestas*. They are depicted by Livy as behaving ridiculously, like buffoons (29.37). Jaakko Suolahti summed up: “the quarrel made the censorship and the whole social order a laughing stock.”⁶³

⁶⁰ No details are given by De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².398 or Errington (1989) 98. Walbank (1971) 76 stated that “no confidence is to be placed in the rhetorical account of Livy’s annalistic source”.

⁶¹ This ‘detail’ is dismissed by Mommsen (1895) 2.336, De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².264, and Briscoe (1989) 54. Lazenby (1978) 112 follows quite the opposite story in Polyb. 8.35.

⁶² At last some attention is paid to such detail: De Sanctis (1907-1964) 3.2².293, anecdotes one can neither affirm nor deny; recorded by Lazenby (1978) 123, but omitted by Mommsen (1895) 2.338, Briscoe (1989) 54, and Bagnall (1990) 253. It tells us more about Livy than about Hannibal: Lancel (1998) 132.

⁶³ Thomas (1994); Suolahti (1963) 329. More moderns have detected the comic here: Mommsen (1887-1888) 3.252 wrote of frivolity, Münzer, *RE* XIII (1927) 899 of spite.

37. There is one episode in Livy which has been seen on various occasions as writing in comic mode: the Bacchanalian conspiracy. Adele Scafuro described 39.8-19 as “Livy’s comic narrative of the Bacchanalia.” “In Livy the Bacchantes are immoral and dangerous — sex addicts, criminals, forgers of wills, and murderers.” There are comic elements in the characterisation (the wicked, miserly stepfather, the noble courtesan, the circumspect young man), the plot (notably the happy ending) and the language (*excetra* is both a water snake and a spiteful woman!). In addition, however, Livy has ‘disrupted’ the comic paradigm, because in comedy character and status are ultimately found to coincide; here the senate confers on Hispala the status required by her nature. There is also parody: the medical metaphor of the Bacchic disease (39.9.1) is continued in Hispala’s quarantine (39.14.13), and imitates Bacchic purification. Livy must have been aware of all this and exploited the possibilities.⁶⁴

38. When Ti. Sempronius Gracchus the Elder, propractor in Spain in 179, met the Spanish envoys, it was a hot midday. They asked for one drink, then another. The bystanders (presumably Roman) laughed at their lack of etiquette or self-control (40.47.5), a case of incongruity: the Spaniards’ actions “appear ridiculous”, also because the Romans are about the attack their town (McClain).⁶⁵

39. When there was a locust plague in Apulia in 173, Cn. Sicinius was invested with *imperium* to fight them (42.10.8)! Livy is the only source for this story. Presumably the enemy were annihilated! Do we need to be reminded of what *imperium* was: “the supreme power, involving command in war and the interpretation and execution of law (including the infliction of the death penalty)”?⁶⁶ To fight locusts — even if they are in plague proportions?

40. Q. Marcius Philippus (cos. 169) had to descend from Mt Olympos to the plain between Herakleion and Leibethra via lake Ascaris. With him were elephants, which panicked. The solution in getting them down may be retold in Livy’s words (44.5.2-7):

⁶⁴ Scafuro (1989) 119-142. Arallaschi (1990) 35f. argued that Plautus’ play, dated to 188, was a parody of these events. Walsh (1994) 5 described 39.8-14 as “unique in Livy’s pages in the approximation to a dramatic performance.” Then in (1996) 192f., still in ignorance of Scafuro, he suggested that Livy’s main source was Postumius Albinus (cos. 151), perhaps via Piso.

⁶⁵ McClain (2006) 39.

⁶⁶ Philip Derow in *OCD* 1996, 751. Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 9.2.78 suggested that Sicinius had to enlist men. Münzer, *RE* IIA (1923) 2197 thought the whole operation was a cover for the Illyrian War; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1².269 is interested only in these activities in 172.

The confusion of an attack by an enemy was caused by the elephants, which on arriving at the pathless places cast off their mahouts and with horrible trumpetings caused a great panic, especially among the horses, until a plan was devised for getting them through. On the steep hillside the slope was marked off, and at the lower end two long strong posts were set in the ground, separated by a distance slightly greater than the width of one of the beasts; on a cross-beam laid upon these posts, planks, each thirty feet long, were fastened together to form a runway, and earth thrown on top of them. Next, at a slight interval below, a second runway of the same sort was built, then a third, and others one after the other, where the cliffs were sheer. From firm ground an elephant would advance on to the runway; before he could proceed to its end, the posts were cut and the tilting of the runway forced the animal to slide gently to the head of the next runway. Some of the elephants would slide standing erect, others would squat on their haunches. Whenever they were met with the level expanse of another runway, they were again carried down by a like collapse of the lower structure, until they arrived at the more passable valley. [trans. Schlesinger]

Of all commentators, political and military, only Howard Scullard admits that the “picture presented is slightly [*sic*] comic.”⁶⁷ The humour relies mostly on incongruity (one of the main categories of humour): the dignified animal being so undignified; also in part on the old device of seeing animals as humans: some standing, some squatting.

*41. In this way the Romans finally reached the plain. This was too close for comfort for Perseus, who was supposedly in his bath when the news was announced. “He leapt in terror from the tub, and burst forth shouting that he had been defeated without a battle” (44.6.1). Livy again indulges in ridicule of kings in undignified circumstances.⁶⁸

42. Following the murder of Evander at Samothrace in 168, everyone deserted Perseus and he had to escape. He arranged for a ship to take him to Thrace. The king escaped in the middle of the night “by a back door of the house into a garden next to his bedroom, and from there scrambled with difficulty over a wall and reached the sea” (45.6.4). Here again Livy enjoys the king’s plight. He had had to leap out of his bath naked; now he is depicted not only climbing a wall in panic, but also having trouble in so doing.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Scullard (1974) 182. Mommsen (1895) 2.503 does not mention the elephants; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1².294 does, but without detail; Meloni (1953) 299 mentions only their creating disorder.

⁶⁸ Omitted by the standard histories, simply quoted by Meloni (1953) 302.

⁶⁹ Omitted by Mommsen (1895) 2.507, De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1².324, Derow (1989) 316, and even Meloni (1953) 406.

43. In the inordinately long speech assigned to M. Servilius Pulex (cos. 202) in arguing in favour of the triumph of Aemilius Paullus, the climax was reached when he (not unprecedentedly) stripped in front of the assembly to show his own wounds. In so doing, “he chanced to uncover what should have remained concealed, a tumour in his groin — and those closest laughed” (45.39.17). He turned the tables on these scoffers completely, however, by pointing out that this too was a result of war service. We may also note that Livy is no prude, saying exactly what caused the laughter: a kind of hernia.⁷⁰

HUMOUR IN COMMENT, INTERPRETATION

44. Livy recoils from reciting the crimes of Tarquin to incite revolution: *his atrocioribus, credo, aliis, quae praesens rerum indignitas haudquamquam relatu scriptoribus facilia subicit, memoratis incensam multitudinem perpulit* ... (1.59.11). The idea that the master of historical narrative and rhetorical recreation was, by his own statement, not equal to the task of reproducing Brutus’ sentiments, given his retelling of the story of Lucretia in the previous chapter, is highly ironic. This is incontestably Livy’s comment about himself.

45. A well-known case of Livy’s prejudice is illustrated by the scapegoat for the disaster at Cannae, C. Terentius Varro. A vast crowd went out to meet him as he returned bedraggled to Rome. Livy adds with grim but satisfying humour that had he been a Carthaginian general, there was no punishment he might not have suffered (22.61.15), meaning, crucifixion!⁷¹ This is both Schadenfreude and incongruity: that a Roman consul should suffer the death of a slave.

46. L. Furius Purpureo (praetor 200) was granted a triumph over the Gauls by influence (*gratia*). He deposited money in the treasury — but there was no show: no captives, no spoils, no soldiers. The additional

⁷⁰ This is “the one witticism which does survive from his sources, which Livy failed to appreciate,” according to Ogilvie (1965) 4. Münzer, *RE* VIIA (1939) 1807 merely noted Servilius’ reputation for wit (Cic. *de orat.* 2.261, Macrob. *Sat.* 2.2.10) — but the cruel laughter was at his expense! Catin (1944) 140: an example of wit “more gross”. McClain (2006) 35-36: laughter at a social superior. A very kind reviewer for the journal drew attention to an apposite comment by Cicero (*De Orat.* 2.249): Sp. Carvilius’ limp as a result of war service.

⁷¹ Passed over, for example, by Münzer, *RE* VA (1934) 688, and Lazenby (1978).

ironic comment is most naturally Livy's own: "everything but the victory was in the possession of the consul [Aurelius Cotta]" (*omnia praeter victoriam penes consulem esse apparebat*: 31.49.2-3).⁷²

47. Livy declared Polybios *haudquaquam spernendus auctor* (30.45.5) and later *non incertus auctor* (33.10.10). The comment must be Livy's, since he is referring to one of his principal sources. Luciano Canfora rightly describes this as "comic", given that Polybios was one of his major sources.⁷³ It is irony.

48. Cato is described by Livy as *haud sane detractor laudum suarum* (34.15.9) ("not slow to blow his own trumpet"), a nice joke at the expense of the self-righteous old man, who had declared that he would not mention the names of any generals in his *Origines*, and then filled them with his own speeches. There have, of course, been attempts to claim that the reference is copied, from Cic. *Cat.* 31, but there is no connection whatsoever: Cicero has Cato simply speaking "frankly" (*vera praedicans de se*).⁷⁴

49. During Cato's consulship in Spain (195) the Bergistani revolted. They were easily subdued. A little later they revolted again, but this time were shown no mercy, but were sold into slavery. Livy is the obvious author for the additional comment, tongue in cheek, that this was to prevent their disturbing the peace too frequently (*saepius*) (34.16.9-10).⁷⁵ This is incongruity to the point of reversal: cruelty masquerading as charity.

⁷² Mommsen (1887-1888) 1.130 noted that the army usually did not return from Spain for a triumph; Münzer, in *RE* VII (1912) 362 thought that this victory was a doublet with that of Cethegus in 197; De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1.400 upheld the authenticity of the triumph against Münzer; Briscoe (1973-1012) 1.161 calculated the total booty at 171,500 denarii and referred to Frank (1933-1940) 1.127-138 for the list of Republican booty, but most of the sums are gold and silver bullion, so not easy to compare; Harris (1989) 111 commented that the victory was "important enough" to win Furius a triumph. Only Catin (1944) 143 spotted Livy's irony.

⁷³ Canfora (1993) 182. Litotes (ironic understatement): Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 7.2.181. Not discussed by Walbank (1972).

⁷⁴ Briscoe (1973-2012) 2.77 comments only on *detractor*; Chassignet (1986), frag. 5.1 irrelevantly adduced Cic. *Cato* 31, and Plut. *Cato M.* 10.3: exactly the opposite (!): what Cato said of his success in Spain was no mere boast (*kompos*). No note on Livy's comment in Beck & Walter (2001) 1.208.

⁷⁵ Astin (1978) 42 rewrote the joke: "deterrence by stern example replaced the previous policy of conciliation"! Gelzer in *RE* XXII (1952) 114 invented an irony of his own: the episode was a duplication (cf. Livy 21.6). Astin refuted this, 304-305. Briscoe (1973-2012) 2.79 has nothing. Catin (1944) 144 calls it mock charity.

50. Antiochos at Thermopylai (191) blocked the pass with a double wall, a ditch, and a stone rampart, and had 4,000 Aitolian allies. This, Livy noted, was the place renowned for the death of the Lakedaimonians. Antiochos therefore acted “with a spirit wholly unlike theirs” (*haud quamquam pari tum animo*) (36.15.12-16.3). This is wicked litotes (Catin): Leonidas had only the famous three hundred. It will all end also in Schadenfreude: the Romans will circumvent all these obstacles.⁷⁶ The most likely source for the contrast is a Greek: Polybios, but Livy surely well knew the events of 480.⁷⁷

51. Philip’s ascent of Mt Haimos, from where one could see far in all directions. This was a dangerous, arduous and long climb (three days). It was all, however, to no avail. Fog descended, and nothing could be seen. The party on its return did not reveal this, “to prevent the futility of the journey becoming a subject of jest” (*ne vanitas itineraris ludibrio esset*) (40.21-22). This is Schadenfreude (Catin).⁷⁸

52. In 168 Perseus sent a large sum of money to bribe Gentius, king of the Illyrians, to make war on the Romans. Little had arrived before he attacked the Romans, whereupon Perseus recalled the money. Livy comments with irony: “as if his only concern were to save as much booty as possible for the Romans after his defeat” (44.27.12)! The money was indeed found at Pella by the Romans, marked for Gentius (44.46.8). Catin pointed out the irony.⁷⁹

OMITTED JOKES

53. Calpurnius Piso (frag. 37 Forsythe) described Cn. Flavius, aedile in 304, tricking the nobles who were disrespectful to him by laughingly (*id arrisit*) placing his curule chair across the entrance to the room, thus preventing their exit. Livy omits the laughter (9.46.9). Livy had converted what in Piso, who was not noted for levity, is a frivolous matter

⁷⁶ Catin 143. De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.158 tells the story deadpan. Briscoe (1973-2012) 2.242-243 is concerned only with Livy’s geographical mistakes. Errington (1989) 284 comes closest: it was “considerably less glorious” than 480.

⁷⁷ Greek sources Plut. *Cato* 13 and App. *Syr.* 18 make no such contrast, but Front. *Strat.* 1.24.11 compares Leonidas.

⁷⁸ Catin (1944) 138. De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1.248 devotes one line to the exploit. Walbank (1940) 248-250 is worried about the identification of the mountain.

⁷⁹ Only Catin (1944) 143 notes Livy’s irony. Meloni (1953) 328 missed the joke. Briscoe (1973-2012) 4.556 is again concerned with corrupt text.

into a deadly contest for *dignitas* between the old nobility and the new man now invested with state office. For Livy obviously these things were *not* laughing matters. He has greatly heightened the drama and political meaning of the confrontation. Walsh cleverly adduced this example.⁸⁰

54. In the siege of Syracuse in 214, Archimedes' defence is so effective that Marcellus makes jokes at his own expense. One is recorded by Polybios (8.6.6), but is not repeated by Livy. It is very complicated, and the average reader of Polybios would not be very enlightened. It involves double meanings: the *sambuca* is both a harp and a drawbridge. Yet this missing quotation is used by Ogilvie to accuse Livy of omitting humour and by Walsh to accuse him even of "dehumanizing" leading actors!⁸¹ The omission is easily explained: Livy must have thought the joke too recondite.

55. At the conference of Nikaia 198/7 (above, no. 13), Philip goes on to make two more jokes: that the Aitolians are not Greeks and that he will send gardeners to restore a ravaged sanctuary, at both of which Flaminius laughs (Polyb. 18.6.1, 5). Livy, however, omits both these laughs (32.34.4, 10). And at the end of the first day, when Philip bemoans the fact that he has no advisor to help him, Flaminius then jests that that is because he has killed them all (Polyb. 18.7.6)! This also is not repeated by Livy.

To understand this vital encounter it is necessary to understand Polybios' attitude to Flaminius; for he is Livy's source. Matthias Gelzer thought that he was favourable — but this is because of his comments on the declaration of Corinth (18.46.14), not this double-dealing at Nikaia. Frank Walbank was more to the point in describing Polybios as showing Flaminius exhibiting "a deceptively friendly attitude towards Philip." John Briscoe more recently judged that "Polybios had little love lost for Flaminius." This is undoubtedly correct. In this case, having declared the king a scoffer, Polybios was showing Flaminius in a far from favourable light by having him share the king's humour, while at the same time revealing that he was utterly deceitful about the peace negotiations.

⁸⁰ Walsh (1955) 371. No one else detected this omission: Forsythe (1994) 339f.; Chassignet (1999) 124; Courtney (1999) 141f.; Beck & Walter (2001) 1.313f. Niebuhr (1855) 3.319 suggested that "*Piso* related this incident with evident delight." Another source tells the story, Val. Max. 2.5.2, also without laughter.

⁸¹ Walbank (1957-1979) 2.77; Walsh (1955) 78; Ogilvie (1965) 4; no note in Weissenborn & Müller (1880-1924) 4.3.82; the joke is omitted in the standard histories.

Now we can turn to Livy. This is the case of “omitted humour” used by Walsh to claim that Livy’s judgement was astray and that he is guilty of “distortion of the facts”. The explanation for the omissions is very simple: example 13 has clearly shown that Livy had a very clear sense of appropriate decorum for leading figures. He was prepared to give the king his jokes, to demonstrate his flippancy, but he obviously thought showing approval or sympathy inappropriate for a Roman in Flamininus’ position. As Walbank noted, he could obviously do little else after having reproved Philip; he was also acting in accordance with the rules enunciated by Cicero. Walsh himself, indeed, had seen another reason for Livy’s omission: to have Flamininus sharing Philip’s jests would reveal “an unfriendly attitude towards his own allies”! Polybios’ portrait of Flamininus is, in short, much more psychologically and historically convincing.⁸²

SUMMING UP

There are a number of paradoxes here. Livy’s history contains many examples of humour. Given the seriousness of his subject and approach, this is admittedly rather paradoxical. His sense of humour has therefore been denied by the majority of commentators, but has been seen by a handful. Almost every one of the above examples has, indeed, been spotted by at least one modern scholar, so the data presented here are in no way new. It is the assembling which counts — and they constitute an impressive list.

Two-fifths of the examples are jokes put into the mouths of characters in his story. One might assume that he composed most of these speeches, but in a number of cases he reveals that he is only following a tradition. The authors of the jests are Romans such as the tyrant Tarquin the Proud (3), the arch patrician Claudii (5, 7), the grim Papirius Cursor (6) — and note also (28), Fabius Cunctator (10, 12), the embittered Livius Salinator (11), the genial Philippus (19), the senate (20), and women:

⁸² Walsh (1955) 371, 374; Gelzer (1962-1964) 3.45; Walbank (1957-1979) 2.557-558; Walbank (1971) 69; Briscoe (1973) 22; McClain (2006) 43-44 stresses Walsh’s explanation. Modern narratives vary enormously in approach to these discrepancies: De Sanctis (1907-1964) 4.1².69 removes all human elements from the negotiations (not even mentioning the place!); Holleaux (1938-1968) 5.29f. notes the three jokes and Livy’s editing, the king’s impetuosity and sarcasm, and Flamininus’ patience to the point of complaisance; Walbank (1940) 160 follows Polybios and does not note Livy’s variations.

Tullia (2), Aemilia (18). Beyond Romans, jokes are attributed to the primitive Latins (1). Even Rome's enemies can be shown as witty: Hanno (8), Hannibal (9, 15), Philip of Macedon (13, 17, 55). and Nabis (14).⁸³ The forms of humour range from ridicule to irony, sarcasm, paradox, play on names, and simply black humour. This category of the wit of his historical personages reminds us once again of the highly oral nature of ancient society and the great value placed on the spoken word. Even in a prose work of the length and serious intent of the *ab urbe condita* speeches were a vital element and Livy was famous for his use of speech, both to enliven the narrative and to reveal character.

Humour in the narrative is mostly the ridiculous: the drunken flautists (26), the young Gauls' laughter (29), Flaminius' fall (30), the madness of the slave army (32), the flight of Philip (33), the capture of Tarentum (34), auctions in 211 (35), the censors of 204 (36), the immoderate Spanish envoys (38), the locust command (39), the elephant slide (40), and *two* flights of Perseus (41, 42). There was also reversal and Schadenfreude (24, 25, 26, 27); double entendre (21, 22, 23); paradox: Papirius Cursor (28); perhaps merely a tall story (31), and misplaced levity: Servilius Pulex's mockers (43). Most remarkable of all, there was a major story derived from comic models (37). Jokes at the expense of royalty most frequently hinge on undignified circumstances (eluding capture). The various forms of Hannibal's wit are again on show.

In the third category (what is Livy's own commentary), irony is the most obvious form of his wit, especially regarding his sources (27, 28). Here are further vital insights into the character of a man who is usually said to reveal nothing of himself. These comments spread across psychological analysis, incompetent generals, his leading sources (Polybios and Cato), doubtful triumphs, cruelty masquerading as charity, and the ridicule of Greek kings.

We know, finally, that Livy has several times omitted jokes and laughter: that of Flavius, to good effect (53) the rather laboured one of Marcellus (54) and what he considered the undignified reactions of Flaminius (55): it is highly significant he did not edit Philippus' wit in the same situation.

⁸³ It is striking that in the *Saturnalia*, when examples are called for of the wit of famous men, the first case cited is Hannibal (Macrobian *Sat.* 2.2.2). And note the case of Hannibal's hysterical laughter (30.44.6).

The categories of humour identified by modern scholars in Cicero turn out to be most illuminating when compared with Livy. It is now obvious that Livy's humour owes nothing to the kinds of wit practised by his great prose predecessor — and who would expect it? The kind of gentle humour Cicero uses with friends in his private letters was unlikely to find any echo in a public text concerned with seven centuries of Roman history. Cicero's best-known kind of wit is in his speeches, where his overriding objective, naturally, was to win the case, whatever it took. There is in Livy no Schadenfreude deriving from bodily deformity (the closest is 43 and that turns out, significantly, to be the very opposite: an honourable blemish which *subdues* laughter), no playing with *cognomina* (except the civilized example of Philippus: 19), no attention to someone's mouth (or face) to ridicule them (the closest is Volumnius finding his tongue: 7), and no example of risible effeminacy. There are cases of Schadenfreude, but they are rare, mostly at the expense of Greek kings, acting ignominiously or caught in ridiculous circumstances (33, 41-2, 50-52), apart from that the flute-players (26) and two of Livy's *bêtes-noires*, Flaminius (30) and Varro (45). To these categories we have still to add one of Cicero's favourites: the risqué joke, or the downright salacious. There are no sexual jokes in Livy. This must be explained by two keys: first, his personal character. He obviously enjoyed a good joke, and was far from prudish, but applied what we might call 'standards of decency', as he defined them. He was also famous for his kindness: his humour therefore is rarely unkind. Second, the history of Rome that flowed on from the lofty sentiments of the preface did not at all lend itself to frivolity. Even the greatest of Rome's heroes, such as Scipio, however, were human, and Livy allowed them to exhibit their lighter sides. The humour of Livy is thus revealed as being of a very individual kind, quite different from that of other Roman literary figures — but then his purpose and situation were totally different from theirs.

Two further comments must be made, one about Livy, the other about his modern successors. In half a dozen cases, the humorous speech or event is only a tradition which Livy is not vouching for, but he still records it. This is clear evidence that he recognised and understood the joke and did not want to throw it away. We must always remember that in the last analysis Livy was the one writing the story, so he and only he decided what to include and to exclude: he chose, in fact, every word.

Modern commentators, on the other hand, as the notes abundantly demonstrate, have *in almost all cases* edited out Livy's humour. It is the

moderns who have a much more sober concept of history than Livy did. And then orthodoxy claims that Livy had no sense of humour!

Not to be omitted in evidence in a discussion of humour in Livy is a digression which has been much commented on. He was closely interested in the history of the comic theatre at Rome. As he shows, a major part of the early history of what became the *ludi scaenici* was Roman youths imitating Tuscan flautists and dancers “exchanging jests in uncouth verses” (*simul inconditis inter se iocularia fundentes versibus*). Then when professional actors took over, drama abandoned laughter and jest (*risu et soluto ioco*), but the young men continued their traditional ridicule in verse (*ridicula intexta versibus iactitare*) (7.2).⁸⁴

There are, on the other hand, a number of other episodes where Livy was seemingly *unaware* of contradictions which may cause his modern readers to smile. In the beginning of the Republic, he depicts the Romans taking an oath that they will tolerate no king in Rome (2.2.3). This is only a dozen lines after Livy has stated that the Romans have appointed a *rex sacrificulus* (2.2.1), who in fact held office for life. His notorious patriotism can lead him into similar difficulties. He noted the fierce love of country which possessed all classes following the disaster at Cannae (23.49.3): an example was the way in which the armies in Spain were to be provisioned. Three companies of *publicani* offered to undertake the duty, requiring only a form of state insurance against the elements or the enemy. Three years later it is revealed that these companies were totally dishonest, deliberately sinking ships to claim compensation (25.3.8f). His ignorance of law is well illustrated by his setting of a blatant trap into which he is the first to fall: he has Appius Claudius ask rhetorically who was better entitled to make an appeal than a man uncondemned, whose case had not even been heard (3.56.13)! The greatest trap awaiting any historian, however, is anachronism. In the debate over the repeal of the Oppian law in 195 Cato’s arguments are countered by the tribune Valerius, who brilliantly quotes the consul’s own *Origines* against him (34.5.8f). The only trouble is that Cato had not yet written them. Most puzzling

⁸⁴ Weissenborn & Muller (1880-1924) 3.1.195 suggested that the source was Cincius; nothing on humour in Oakley (1999-2005) 2.59. Historians of drama have different views. Beare (1964) 16f. detected a moral purpose: “to show from what limited and wholesome beginnings the dramatic art has reached the intolerable vogue it possesses in his day ... Like most educated Romans, Livy despised the theatre.” Be that as it may, he was most interested in its early history. Duckworth (1952) 4f. found Livy’s account basically reliable, but Gratwick (1982) 78 declared it all a “muddle”.

— and amusing — of all, however, are the gaps in his knowledge as a trained grammarian, and foremost here is his wonder that the Romans could employ their fleet against Fidenae (4.35.6). He did not know the original meaning of *classis*! Others did (Cato *de lege Voconia* in Gell. 6.14). We should, however, be loath to indulge in humour at Livy's expense over such small slips. This was the greatest historical undertaking in antiquity: 142 books, the labour of a lifetime. What this essay has attempted to do is gather together as many examples as possible in speech, event and authorial comment where Livy has lightened his annals with gentle humour and revealed to us a fundamental, but mostly denied, trait of his character.

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CAPUT MUNDI: ROME AS CENTER IN ROMAN REPRESENTATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE

Abstract: It is well-known that for ancient Romans the city of Rome represented *caput mundi*, the center of the world. Starting from socio-geographical and psychological theories about centralism and centrality, this article aims to investigate the structures of centrality adopted in the Roman culture to structure mentally the space of the *imperium*. It analyzes the ways in which the centrality of Rome was constructed in discourse and representation, as well as the forms in which the entire Italian peninsula was conceived and presented as a center of the Empire, finally considering, at a micro-geographical level, whether structures of centrality are recognizable within the city of Rome, and how they changed over time. A systematic analysis of such discourses and representations of space, and of their diachronic evolution, allows to recognize that such structures of centrality are a component and a product of the ‘cultural revolution’ of the late third-early second century BCE, which transformed Rome into an ‘imperial Republic’.

INTRODUCTION

In opening a seminal article on center and periphery in Rome, Francois Toulze stated that

les représentations qu’une société donne et se donne d’elle-même ne relèvent pas uniquement de la parole et de l’écriture. Une société se dit à travers son rapport à l’espace et au temps, c’est-à-dire sa géographie, son histoire, ses institutions, ses structures sociales, ses dieux, sa langue. La ville, le temple, le champ de bataille ou le champ cultivé, le camp militaire ou la place publique constituent un langage. En ce sens, ce n’est pas l’espace en tant que tel, l’espace pur qui est langage mais la configuration de l’espace, le code spécifique qui sous-tend l’organisation spatiale¹.

After the ‘spatial turn’, since the 1990s², historians have learned that they must be more aware of the spatial component of a society, and of how different cultures formulate the spatial ‘language’ Toulze was talking about³. Classical studies and ancient history have also, correspondingly, increased their attention to such aspects. In particular, they applied the

¹ Toulze (1993) 87.

² Warf & Arias (2009).

³ See Bachmann-Medick (2009) 284-328.

idea, derived from geography and social sciences, of space as a social construct, which can reveal much of the political and institutional but also of the cultural, religious and mental structures of a given society. A conference of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, in 2011, inquired how space in ancient societies, thus constructed, can also assume a normative value, deriving from existing social, political and cultural structures but then through its own coming into existence confirming and enforcing them, imposing values, norms and *Weltanschauungen*⁴.

But there are other aspects, which deserve greater attention. In particular, it seems necessary to highlight the fact that, once the social nature of space is assumed, two different aspects can and must be analyzed: the concrete interaction of man with space itself (drawing boundaries, building buildings, marking places with inscriptions, distances etc.) and the representation of space, its abstract elaboration, on the graphic level of cartography but also in discursive representations. These two levels interact with each other in multiple ways, since representations influence the way that space is interacted with practically — but are influenced and derive in the end from the physical construction of space itself. This interconnectedness requires a systematic study of the evolution of the cultural aspects of space, starting with a philological/historical examination of the words and concepts connected to space and their use in constructing specific discourses. Space concepts, as well as their practical application and consequences, change over time, resounding with the political, social, and cultural change.

The Roman idea of boundaries, for instance, seems to have faced a real ‘revolution’ around the end of the third — first half of the second century BCE, in concomitance with the end of the Punic Wars and the Roman engagement in the East⁵. Even a concept so religiously loaded as the one of *pomerium* changed in the Roman perception — its meaning as border of the *Urbs* remained, but its concrete interaction with ‘other borders’, with the *ager* and the city walls, as with the provinces and the Empire, changed over time. Also in this case it is visible how the physical construction of space, as e.g. materialized in the city walls and the *cippi* of

⁴ Schmidt-Hofner e.a. (2016). The literature on ancient space construction and perception is meanwhile very abundant, and cannot be discussed here. The topic is, in particular, at the center of the research activities of the excellence cluster “Topoi. The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations” (<https://www.topoi.org/>, last access 13 June 2017).

⁵ Carlà-Uhink (2016).

the *pomerium*, influenced the conceptualization of space and how the historical evolution of such concepts, in its turn, influenced and changed the physical construction of the space, e.g. in the successive displacements of the *pomerium* itself⁶.

It is the aim of this article to focus on the spatial concept of centrality, which let the Romans see their *Urbs* as *caput mundi*, “center of the world” — a concept which was shaped with discourses and legends, as well as with architectonic markers, and which assumed, as it will be shown, great relevance in that crucial phase in which the Romans constructed and conceived — not only politically, but also socially, culturally and spatially — their *imperium*, i.e. in the time between the Hannibalic War and the accomplishment of the so-called ‘conquest of the East’⁷.

CENTRAL PLACES: DEFINITIONS

Many scholars from different academic cultures, such as anthropology, ethnology, geography, psychology, have devoted attention to central places and the related concepts of ‘centrality’ and ‘centricity’. In its original formulation, which goes back to Christaller’s book on central places in Southern Germany, published in 1933 (*Die zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland. Eine ökonomisch-geographische Untersuchung über die Gesetzmäßigkeit der Verbreitung und Entwicklung der Siedlungen mit städtischer Funktion*), the ‘central-place theory’ was elaborated to explain the hierarchical relations between urban centers and their relationship with the countryside. Larger centers display, according to this model, a higher amount of services, i.e. all the services provided by the centers of the immediately lower rank with some addition⁸. At the top of the hierarchy is generally a rank composed by one urban center only, which assumes the role of ‘capital’ of the whole system. The prevailing definition of center is generally an economical one: they are intended often as “areas which controlled more developed technological skills and production processes, forms of labour organisation (e.g. wage labor) and a strong state-ideological apparatus to defend its interests”⁹. This model has also been adapted in

⁶ Carlà (2015).

⁷ On the idea of the late third — early second century BCE as a phase of ‘cultural revolution’ in which Roman mentality was ‘shaped’ in its to us most familiar form, see Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming), too.

⁸ De Landa (2006) 108-109.

⁹ Rowlands (1987) 4.

the study of the ancient world, focusing attention on consumption and production, and identifying the centers as the places of groups of polities and elites consuming resources while peripheries “are constrained to meet demands for surplus products”¹⁰. Central-place theory has been adapted also in order to reconstruct mechanisms of diffusion, for instance in Italy during the Roman Republic, analyzing the market systems of the *nundinae*. The circuits of markets known from Campanian inscriptions show a different composition but a common point in including Rome, in spite of its geographical distance, showing thus how the *Urbs* belonged to that highest hierarchical level which defined it as ‘central’ for the commercial systems of Central-Southern Italy¹¹.

Related to the application of central-place theory to the contemporary world, the development of ‘dependency theory’, and even more its refinement and stronger adaptation to Marxism in the form of the ‘world-system theory’ by Immanuel Wallerstein¹², had repercussions on ancient history, too. While the central-place theory had already incurred different kinds of criticism in its applications to Antiquity, and had e.g. given place, especially for the study of the Greek world, to Peer-Polity-Interaction¹³, the dependence and world-system theories, with their emphasis on globalization, seemed to fit better the Roman world, helping to understand the incorporation of peripheral formations and their internal evolution not only in the vague terms of interaction or diffusion¹⁴. In particular, such theories have helped in better understanding the complexities connected to the concept of centrality: “centre-periphery as a relationship does not therefore predict a fixed and immutable position but implies that constituent groups will move through different statuses as a necessary feature of maintaining the relationship”¹⁵. But the debate which surrounds the application of Wallerstein’s core-periphery model to ancient history, when dealing with economic dependency and with the role of Rome and Italy as ‘consuming areas’ is here of very marginal relevance¹⁶.

¹⁰ Rowlands (1987) 5.

¹¹ Nonetheless the validity of Central Place Theory in explaining the phenomenon of the *nundinae* has been widely criticized in literature: see in general Ziccardi (2000) and the literature referenced there.

¹² See, for an introduction, Wallerstein (2004).

¹³ E.g. Renfrew & Cherry (1986); Ma (2003)

¹⁴ Rowlands (1987) 3 — but it is important to underline that in this perspective ‘periphery’ is intended as a part not yet incorporated and not yet ‘ordered’.

¹⁵ Rowlands (1987) 10.

¹⁶ As in Hopkins (1980).

Still, replacing Christaller with Wallerstein surely does not obscure the fact that Rome was perceived as the center of the Roman world. Rather, moving over the original formulation of the central-place theory, and trying to extend the understanding of centrality outside the economic fields of production, distribution and consumption, some considerations can still be drawn about the structuring of central places, their spatial perception, and their role in the genesis of a territorial order (also in normative sense). This requires extending the analysis to the field of perception, too, since, as Rudolf Arnheim argued, centrality, being indispensable for orientation, is a constant of human spatial behavior: “psychologically, the centric tendency stands for the self-centered attitude that characterizes the human outlook and motivation at the beginning of life and remains a powerful impulse throughout. [...] A social group, be it a family, an association of persons, a nation, or even humanity as a whole in its relation to nature, retains centricity as a strong component of its outlook and motivation”¹⁷. Even eccentricity exists only in reference to centricity, as denial of it or better as reference to a center, which is outside the space under direct consideration. Such a center necessarily has a physical nature — it does not exist only as metaphor or as symbol, but is set in a particular point, from where it organizes the surrounding space¹⁸. In his *Man and Space*, Bollnow had already underlined that the “mathematical” space is integrated by a “lived space”, which is differentiated from the former by some specific characteristic. First and foremost, in the “lived space” the points are not all equivalent, and it is not possible to take any of them as reference of an axial system — it always needs a “center”; additionally, the different points and spaces show a qualitative difference, they are not “neutral” when it comes to their (symbolic) value and are loaded with meaning, and the system knows clear boundaries¹⁹. Even if Bollnow wrote all this considering rather the individual construction of space, and the ways in which every single person perceives and organizes space and moves in it, such considerations can be moved to the reference spatial system of a group or community²⁰.

¹⁷ Arnheim (1988) 2.

¹⁸ Arnheim (1988) 13.

¹⁹ Bollnow (1963) 16–18.

²⁰ Bollnow recognized also the existence of a collective center and of collective orientations, but did not discuss them in particular, see Bollnow (1963) 59.

Centers are physical places in which particular values are deposited; this makes them inviolable and characterizes them as such²¹. As models of the entire cosmos, they are a reproduction and a sign of natural and social order. This can be defined “ethnocentrism”, “a construct of space which sees the center of the world as the best or most advanced location, and therefore demotes distant peoples to the status of unworthy savages”²², and is an almost universal cultural phenomenon. The existence and protection of order is materialized not only in the physical existence of the center itself (which assumes in settled societies generally a clear architectural structure)²³, but also by the symbols and ritual practices staged there. The connection between the center and the maintenance of order is basilar in giving to the central point also a sacred meaning, as it was made clear already by Mircea Eliade, who identified in it the basic concept of space organization and orientation²⁴. The individuation of the center, a fixed point which should become the axis of any future orientation, is indeed the fundamental act for the constitution of an organized space. Successive steps in spatial organization find in this center, which assumes a sacred character, a beginning, a foundation and a legitimation.

This has been recognized both in the study of other societies — as in the Ancient Near East, for which Mario Liverani speaks of a “centralistic” idea of power, or in Lagazzi’s definition of a “centralistic frontier” for the Middle Ages²⁵ — and in general geographic, sociologic and political literature. Since the center transmits, rules and guarantees the existence of order²⁶, these values are also of political nature: the center is the natural seat of power, and who detains the control of this geographical point detains power, as it was clear already to Herodotus²⁷.

In the case of Rome, the position of the *Urbs* as central place is relevant in connection with the birth and the development of those territorial concepts, which, mirrored in the administrative organization, structured the Roman State and defined its inner structure. The idea of a Roman *oikoumene*, as the economic and cultural productivity of the provinces, which cannot be disputed, did not bring at all to a complete equivalence

²¹ Remotti e.a. (1989) 30. See also Arnheim (1988) 109.

²² Romm (1992) 46.

²³ Remotti e.a. (1989) 69.

²⁴ Eliade (1952) 47-72.

²⁵ Lagazzi (1981); Liverani (1988).

²⁶ Remotti e.a. (1989) 37-39.

²⁷ Serres (1993) 104.

of Rome and the rest of the Empire, nor to the disappearance in geographical thought and spatial perception of a distinction between center and periphery in the name of a complete “integration of city and Empire in every respect”²⁸ — not even after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. A good sign of this is the way in which Rome’s centrality is still evident in the *Tabula Peutingeriana* — on which more will be said below — as well as the single verse dedicated to the *Urbs* opening Ausonius’ *Ordo urbium nobilium*, next to the descriptions of Rome in Claudian and Rutilius Namatianus²⁹.

It is important to underline that no society is strictly monocentric: perceiving the center as mostly sacred and symbolic allows recognizing the existence of a hierarchical structure of centers, exactly as in the ‘original’ central place-theory; once again, such a hierarchy is immediately perceivable through the definition of centers as geographical places. The hierarchical structure brings in any case a ‘monocentric tendency’, in the meaning that one center emerges upon all others as the most important depository of values. Around this most important center the other ones are structured, both in a hierarchical system which is e.g. expressed, in Roman antiquity, in the system of cities (provincial capitals, *civitates*, *vici* and *pagi* etc.) and in the clear structuring of the Roman world as a concentric system, in which the centrality of Rome stays next to the centrality of Italy in comparison to the provinces.

It is the aim of this article, therefore, to study the ways in which Rome was perceived as the center of the *oikoumene*, how its centrality was visualized on maps and itineraries, how it was constructed through space-shaping operations and mythological narratives. After this, I will consider how Rome was embedded in a system of concentric centralities, focusing particularly onto the centrality of Italy, its construction and its relevance in shaping the Roman Empire as an ordered structure. Finally, I will zoom onto the city of Rome itself, in order to reveal that ‘inside the center’ further centers can be identified, and that the ‘capital’, once considered as a surface, requires once again its own central spaces. At all stages, I will be careful in identifying, as much as possible considering the condition

²⁸ Isaac (2011), 70-72.

²⁹ Aus. *Ord. urb.* 1; Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 3.130-173; Rut. Nam. 1.47-164. It is interesting to underline that one of the literary devices, through which Rutilius underlines Rome’s centrality, is the idea that the city collects in itself all natural elements, as rivers (the aqueducts) and woods (the gardens): as it will be shown below, this is a recurrent strategy which was adopted already in Republican times.

of the available sources, any hint which might help in dating the birth and development of these spatial formations, in order to tentatively connect their genesis to the political and social history of the Roman state.

PLACING ROME AT THE CENTER

There is probably no need to say that the center of the world, in the symbolic geography of the Romans, was Rome, the *caput orbis terrarum*³⁰ — Toulze spoke even of an “obsession” on centering, shown in the fact that Rome must absorb, domesticate, englobe³¹. This is perfectly visible, for instance, in Aelius Aristides’ speech *To Rome*, which insists on how, when conceiving the entire Empire as a polis, Rome would represent its “city center”, its acropolis (26.61). In addition, Aristides also highlights that every product from every single land of the world is present in Rome (26.11-13). This point, perfectly resonating with the ‘traditional’, economic idea of central places, as described above, can be found in Pliny the Elder, too³². More generally, the idea that the display of wares, materials, pieces of art and fragments from all over the world is a characteristic of Rome, revealing its centrality, is a quite recurrent *topos* during the Principate³³.

The entire idea of *imperium Romanum* (including its eventual supposed universality) is connected, according to what has been said, with the existence of a center qualified to work out as *caput orbis* and *rerum domina*³⁴. And the extremely banal statement of Rome’s centrality can be further proved by geographic and cartographic sources³⁵. The biggest problem in this case is the lack of ancient material: but even under these conditions the structure of the pictorial representations of the world appears quite clear.

The most famous ancient map is the already mentioned Peutinger Table, which we know in a medieval copy but was originally realized probably in the early fourth century CE³⁶. The map is unfortunately not complete,

³⁰ Liv. 1.16.6.

³¹ Toulze (1993) 102.

³² Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 3.54.

³³ Edwards (1996) 99-101.

³⁴ Vogt (1929) 159-160; Vogt (1942) 24-25.

³⁵ Serres (1991) 111.

³⁶ Talbert (2010) 142-157.

and it has been presumed, for a long time, that only the first sheet on the left side was missing. Against this interpretation it has more recently been shown, with very convincing arguments, that much more is lacking — actually three sheets, so that the representation of Rome, now on segment IV, was perfectly central, both in horizontal and in vertical sense, thanks to the well-known deformation of distances and landmasses of this map³⁷. Rome, at the center, was also at the center of Italy, which, stretching from segment 5 to segment 9 of 14, also occupied the central section of the Table.

Three cities, additionally, are represented with a special and bigger illustration, Rome, Constantinople and Antiochia. But while all three are illustrated as a female personification on a throne, Constantinople indicates Constantine's column and Antiochia is visualized through the sanctuary of Daphne, Rome (who holds the globe, differently from the other two) is very evocatively represented within two concentric circles, which highlight even more its centrality as main feature. Indeed, as has been underlined, all the roads leading to Rome are connected to this double circle, which therefore visualizes the role of the *Urbs* as most important *caput viarum*³⁸.

It is indeed well known that the road system of the Empire was a relevant factor in determining the way in which space was perceived and mentally constructed at the time. As formulated by Laurence, “the road was the fundamental element for the production of territorial space in the creation of the Roman Empire”³⁹, and Whittaker has already highlighted the role that the network of roads played in demonstrating and reinforcing the idea of the geographic centrality of Rome and therefore in enhancing “the rhetoric of control”⁴⁰. This road system was centered on Rome, where the *milliarium aureum* was placed by Augustus in 20 BCE in the Forum Romanum to mark the starting or final points of all roads⁴¹. It might have recorded the distance from that spot to the main cities of the Empire⁴².

³⁷ Talbert (2010) 87-89.

³⁸ Levi & Levi (1967) 152-153.

³⁹ Laurence (1999) 197.

⁴⁰ Whittaker (2004) 78. On the function of the roads in shaping territory in the Republican period, see also Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming), dealing specifically with the case of Italy.

⁴¹ Dio 54.8.4.

⁴² Plut. *Galb.* 24.4. On the *milliarium aureum*, s. Brodersen (1995) 254-257; Brodersen (1996-1997) 274-277. On the problem of its eventual identification with the *Umbilicus Urbis*, see below.

The centrality constructed through the road system is visualized also in the ‘instruments’ developed to ease the use of the system itself — the milestones. They reveal to travelers their own position, shape their sense of locality⁴³ and, once again, position them relative to the center, be it the regional one or, sometimes, Rome itself, whose presence on the stone, in spite of the high distance, reveals once again its belonging to the highest rank defined above and therefore its role as sole ‘super-center’⁴⁴. Thus the distance from Rome is for instance indicated on a milestone from Savaria, in Pannonia (AE 2000, 1195), which simply contains the indication *A Rom(a) s(unt) m(ilia) p(assuum) DCLXXV*. While other ‘regional centers’ are sometimes represented on milestones placed quite far away from them, and this corresponds to a representative function of the local hierarchy of settlements, too⁴⁵, none of them is present on such inscriptions as far away and at every corner of the Empire as Rome, which is therefore once again perceived as the radiating point of the entire road system⁴⁶.

As for the *itineraria*, they are instruments related to specific travels, and they therefore do not necessarily put Rome in a central position⁴⁷. The *itinerarium Antonini*, basing on a review of the imperial roads prepared under Caracalla, starts from Africa, Sardinia and Sicily, and then moves to Italy. Even if Rome is not at the beginning, it is always the starting or the final point of a road when it is mentioned, and it is in particular the starting point of the longest path present in the work, the one leading from it, via Aquileia, to Byzantium, Antiochia and Alexandria, from where the paths throughout Egypt are described. The symbolic meaning of the *Urbs* remains nonetheless always high where the itineraries are not reporting factual trips or do not have a direct, practical use. The inscription which, in the center of Autun, showed the most important road connections starting from the town, also contained the path to Rome through the via Aemilia, and thus demonstrated the “connection to the capital”⁴⁸. The “Bicchieri di Vicarello” contain, probably deriving them at different moments from an archetype or an official model, slightly different itineraries for the path from Gades (Cádiz) to Rome, represented as the

⁴³ Laurence (1999) 84.

⁴⁴ Kolb (2012) 204.

⁴⁵ Kolb (2007) 171-172.

⁴⁶ Kolb (2007) 172-174, with a list of examples.

⁴⁷ Kolb (2012) 198.

⁴⁸ *CIL* XII 2681a. See Kolb (2007) 176-177.

‘teleological’ end of the road⁴⁹. The very widespread idea that they represent ‘souvenirs’, copying a milestone set in Gades, has been recently criticized with very good arguments; Schmidt has thus suggested, comparing the Bicchieri with an epigram in the *Anthologia Palatina* relating the same path, that they were copied at the beginning of the fourth century CE in Rome from some official ‘road map’ reconstructing the via Herculis, the path followed by Hercules and leading, once again, unmistakably to Rome where, as it was well known, he would meet Cacus and have the Ara Maxima built in his honour⁵⁰.

Also the concepts of *cis*, *trans*, *ultra* etc. (as in Gallia Cisalpina, Cispadana, Transpadana, Hispania Ulterior), frequently used in Roman name-giving, are relative and imply always a standing point from which the geographical area appears to be “on this side”, “on the other side” and so on. This standing point is Rome, whose centrality in space is therefore clearly marked also in toponomastics which, giving names to the places where people live, act, move, constitute an extremely relevant part of their mental horizon and their (spatial) perception of the world.

The importance of Rome, and its hierarchical superiority to the rest of the Empire, implies a centrality which is not purely symbolic, but strongly anchored to topography, and which is constructed, as already mentioned, also through discursive devices. The famous speech held by Camillus, according to Livy, in 390 BCE, when a part of the population had proposed to abandon the city, plundered by the Gauls, and to move to Veii, expresses in the clearest possible way the necessary geographical position of the *Urbs*. Rome is not only where the Romans are, nor its buildings or its ‘surface’; Rome is *solum, terra*, is its geographical position, the hills, the fields and the Tibur, which cannot be abandoned or changed⁵¹. Rome can be only in Rome. This depends first of all on sacral reasons; Roman religious feasts can take place only in the prescribed spots, exactly as the *comitia curiata* and *centuriata*: the State can in the end function with its mechanisms and its supernatural protection only there where it is⁵². Then follows affection;⁵³ and then the perfect geographic position, characterized by centrality:

⁴⁹ CIL XI 3281-3284.

⁵⁰ Metrodoros: *Anth. Pal.* XIV 121. The interpretation put forth here is the one suggested by Schmidt (2011).

⁵¹ Liv. 5.54.2-3. On Camillus’ speech, see Edwards (1996) 45-52.

⁵² Liv. 5.52.3-7; 13-17.

⁵³ Liv. 5.54.2-3.

Not without cause did gods and men select this place for establishing our City — with its healthful hills; its convenient river, by which crops may be floated down from the midland regions and foreign commodities brought up; its sea, near enough for use, yet not exposing us, by too great propinquity, to peril from foreign fleets; a situation in the heart of Italy (*regionum Italiae medium*) — a spot, in short, of a nature uniquely adapted for the expansion of a city⁵⁴.

Livy makes it clear that the centrality of Rome required also a rational explanation, which had already been found, at the end of the Republic, in its topographical position, in particular in relation to the sea, which was far enough not to create trouble but near enough to allow commerce and supply the city. A very similar argument had already been proposed by Cicero, who could have been one of Livy's sources: Romulus chose, with his great foresight, not the seacoast, full of practical and moral dangers, not the deep inland, typically inhabited by barbarians, but the bank of a big and regular river, which leads to a not very distant sea⁵⁵. It is once again a matter of centrality, in the sense of a middle position between the sea and the interior⁵⁶. The centrality of Rome as a geographical virtue was also founded on scientific arguments. From this point of view, the Romans were in debt to Greek literary production. 'Hippocratic' arguments (as to be found in the treaty *Airs, Waters, Places*) and insisting on the fact that qualities of populations are connected to climate, and that only the peoples inhabiting 'central' temperate regions had the right mixture of strength and intelligence, were quite easily transferable to Rome, as it was extensively done in the Late Republic and in the Augustan period (e.g. Sall. *Cat.* 53.3, even if expressing it in the 'negative' way). The geographical position, intermediate and therefore central, becomes thus one of the reasons of the success of the city, which justifies its expansion and its *imperium sine fine* — thus further supporting the idea of the infinity in space and time of Roman rule.

It is not by chance that Camillus' speech against moving to Veii, this most important hymn to centrality and to the physical binding of Roman power to a geographic point, also quotes the myth of Olus' head as one

⁵⁴ Liv. 5.54.4; transl. B.O. Foster.

⁵⁵ Cic. *Rep.* 2.3.5-6.11. See Coarelli (2000) 288-289; 303.

⁵⁶ A different perspective is offered only by Strabo (5.3.8) who argues that while the Greeks paid a lot of attention to the location of their cities, the Romans cared less about that, but were able to use technique to achieve what needed. Rather than exalting the natural position of the city, therefore, he praises the Roman ability in building aqueducts and sewers, in paving roads and cutting through hills.

of the reasons not to leave the city⁵⁷, as this myth constitutes a narrative foundation of Rome's centrality. Additionally, it can help us in identifying the chronology of the development of such a concept. During the excavation to lay the foundations of the Capitoline temple, so the story goes, the workers found a head, the *caput Oli*, aetiologically giving the hill its name⁵⁸. An Etruscan expert confirmed (after having tried to steal for Etruria the *portentum*) that the sign was extremely good: the point where the head had been found would be the head of Italy and of the entire world until the end of the Universe⁵⁹. The legend is attested for the first time in a fragment from Fabius Pictor's work, and probably did not predate by much this moment of written recording⁶⁰. As recently shown by Thein, gems with a representation of this episode confirm that such tradition was invented in the third century BCE — independently from the fact that it could have originally indicated in the Capitoline Hill the center of Italy, and later of the entire world⁶¹.

The centrality of Rome, as described, does not imply that other cities cannot assume, according to the theories defined above, especially from a local/regional perspective, the quality of a center which remains, in any case, a second-rank one when considered in the context of the Empire in its entirety and from the point of view of the Roman (in particular political and institutional) culture. That specific religious beliefs could recognize a special cultic center was not a challenge to the centrality of Rome in the Empire, especially since such religions were generally very well defined and circumscribed. In this sense, it is not in contradiction with the centrality of Rome that, for instance, the Jews in the Roman Empire placed Jerusalem at the center of their religious maps even when completely at peace with the Roman rule. Even less contradicts the centrality of Rome the fact that moments of opposition or even rebellion to the Roman rule could express themselves in the desire to replace Rome with another center — quite on the contrary, this is a demonstration of the importance of Rome's centrality in Roman power and in the discourses

⁵⁷ Liv. 5.54.7. Camillus insists in many points on the Capitoline Hill, also because it was the only part of the city which remained in Roman hands during the Gallic invasion: 5.51.3; 9; 53.9.

⁵⁸ E.g. Varr. *LL* 5.41.

⁵⁹ E.g. Liv. 1.55.6; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.59-61; Plin. *HN* 28.15. See Piccaluga (1974) 202-203; Piccaluga (1975) 263-264.

⁶⁰ Arnob. 6.7.

⁶¹ Thein (2014) 294-308. See also Edwards (1996) 82-85.

connected to it. An example of this might be the way in which the rebels in the Social War tried to replace Rome with Corfinium, if we believe that their final aim was the destruction of Rome and the construction of an alternative ‘confederation’⁶² — while at the same time highlighting that even the rebels seem to have adopted, at least in their form of self-representation during the war, an idea of Italy as a homogeneous region and a recognizable spatial unit, needing therefore a center⁶³.

If, on the contrary, the aims of the rebels should have been different, we would see in Corfinium a further example of another kind of discourse constructing and reinforcing Roman centrality, which is the narrative of a failed alternative center. Indeed, one of the ways in which Roman sources underline the centrality of Rome is proposing that in the past it might have been possible to have another center, which would have taken the place of Rome, but that this opportunity failed, guaranteeing to the *Urbs* its role and position. Most famously, Capua was represented, after the Second Punic War, in which it fought on Hannibal’s side, as the city which would have become the *caput Italiae* if Hannibal had won the war⁶⁴ — of course, Carthage itself would have then become the center of the *oikoumene*. The importance of this discourse becomes visible if one notices how the necessity to keep Capua ‘humble’ constitutes a relevant argument in the speeches held by Cicero to oppose Rullus’ agrarian law still in 63 BCE⁶⁵.

THE CENTRALITY OF ITALY

Rome is thus clearly at the center of a mental map, which can represent the entire Empire as a succession of concentric circles. There, in the *Urbs*, is the maximum of power but also the maximum of civilization — as is made evident by Ovid, who had been forced to abandon the *Urbs* for Tomi. Toulze suggested a strong element of centrality in the spatial metaphors of pain and sufferance in his poems from exile⁶⁶. Ovid’s testimony is extremely significant exactly because it depends on a personal, psychological situation and on cultural, not political aspects, connected with

⁶² See Isayev (2011); Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming).

⁶³ On this, see Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ E.g. Liv. 23.10.2; 11.11.

⁶⁵ Cic. *Agr.* 1.18-19; 2.87-88.

⁶⁶ Toulze (1993) 115-117. See also Edwards (1996) 116-125.

elements such as language, climate, civilization. Therefore, his clear statement that Rome is the center of a concentric world, where all the best is collected, root and capital of a system, which knows then some ‘intermediate’ places such as Greece or Egypt, and in the end places like Tomi⁶⁷, is an interesting testimony for the history of mentalities⁶⁸. It has already been made clear that the center does not have to be necessarily unique; on the contrary there are always different centers, which can have specific functions and/or be hierarchically organized in a system of centers. Rome, the center of the *oikoumene*, is also the center of Italy, but Italy came to be perceived in its turn as a ‘regional’ center of the Empire, in which middle was the ‘capital’ of the entire world-system, a ‘heartland’ around Rome, differentiated from the provinces and from all the other components of the *imperium*⁶⁹.

The sources indicate this centrality with extreme clarity: when Cicero writes, in an already mentioned passage, that Romulus chose perfectly the geographical site for founding Rome, he concludes that “no other city, situated in another part of Italy” could have reached the same power and greatness⁷⁰. It is interesting to see how Cicero could not even think that Rome could have been founded in another part of the world; Romulus had the great spirit of finding the best spot in the peninsula, which had to host the city destined to such a great future. In praising Romulus’ choice, Cicero underlines that Italy was a necessity. The idea of a centrality of Italy will go on existing also after the provincialization of the Italic soil under Diocletian, and is e.g. evident in the way in which, still in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the peninsula is not only central, but also dramatically overdimensioned in comparison with the rest of the Roman world⁷¹.

The centrality of Italy had exactly the same ‘Hippocratic’ geographical explanations that were used in connection to the city of Rome. The literary genre of the *laudes Italiae* exalted in particular the high productivity of Italian agriculture, motivated by its perfect climatic and soil properties⁷².

⁶⁷ E.g. Ov. *Trist.* 1.2.75-86; 1.3.61-62; 2.187-200; 3.7-14; 3.4.47-58; 3.12.13-26; 5.7.43-64.

⁶⁸ Sonnabend (1998). Already Haushofer (1939) 54 used Tomi as example of changing mentalities (in time and in space) about a particular spot.

⁶⁹ Vogt (1942) 181-182; Nash (1987) 88.

⁷⁰ Cic. *Rep.* 2.5.10.

⁷¹ Hänger (2001) 103-104.

⁷² E.g. Varr. *RR* 1.2.3-8.

Vitruvius makes explicit reference to the differences among peoples inhabiting the different regions of the world, to conclude that the best virtues are to be found in Italy:

On this account the people of Italy excel in both qualities, strength of body and vigor of mind. For as the planet Jupiter moves through a temperate region between the fiery Mars and icy Saturn, so Italy enjoys a temperate and unequalled climate between the north on one side, and the south on the other. Hence it is, that by stratagem she is enabled to repress the attacks of the barbarians, and by her strength to overcome the subtlety of southern nations⁷³.

Vitruvius does not distinguish, or rather explicitly identifies, the geographical virtues of Italy and the natural success of Rome, thus presupposing of course that Rome is positioned in Italy, according to the ‘geographical hierarchy’ (Rome-Italy-rest of the Empire) that has been mentioned and underlining once more the central position of Italy and its deep connection to the *Urbs*. Manilius builds for this even an astrological explanation, when he says that Rome and Italy, as also Tiberius, have the same zodiacal sign:

Italy belongs to the Balance, her rightful sign: beneath it Rome and her sovereignty of the world were founded, Rome, which controls the issue of events, exalting and depressing nations placed in the scales: beneath this sign was born the Emperor ...⁷⁴.

Propertius says explicitly that nature collected in Italy everything, which exists elsewhere, and sees therefore in the peninsula a condensed universe⁷⁵. Analogous the position of Strabo, who lists the geographical advantages of Italy among the factors which brought Rome to its success: such advantages are of geomorphological (accessibility through the Alps, nature of the coast), climatic, floral and faunal nature⁷⁶. These *laudes Italiae* are of course no faithful descriptions but discursive strategies, central part of the process of the rhetorical shaping of an Italian ‘landscape’, which maintains very generic terms, and obvious falsehoods⁷⁷,

⁷³ Vitruv. 6.1.11; transl. J. Gwilt. See Purcell (2007) 183-184.

⁷⁴ Manil. *Astron.* 4.773-776; transl. G.P. Goold.

⁷⁵ Prop. 3.22.

⁷⁶ Strab. 6.4.1; transl. H.L. Jones. On this, see García Morcillo (2010) 87-90.

⁷⁷ The rhetorical nature of this description makes it quite obvious that descriptive ‘truth’ cannot be expected from such texts. On Verg. *Georg.* 2.1361-76, e.g. Thomas (2014) 733 comments that many of the details are “false against the reality of Italy, which despite the passage’s claims does not, for example, have eternal spring (*G.* 2.149) and is

because of the impossibility of reducing the peninsula to common denominators (thus a frequent recourse to the idea of a ‘unity in diversity’ and of a variety representing the entire cosmos)⁷⁸, but which nonetheless constitutes the ‘symbolic shaping’ of Italian geographical identity⁷⁹.

All the sources at our disposition, as it happens, are products of the Late Republican and Early Imperial period, and make it difficult to define more clearly when Italy started being recognized as a ‘region’ surrounding Rome and sharing its centrality⁸⁰. We know that in the temple of *Tellus* in Rome there was a representation of Italy, which is referred to by Varro in Caesar’s time⁸¹. It is impossible to know when exactly this representation, about which we have no further information, was realized. What we know is that already in 174 BCE Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus dedicated a map of Sardinia in the temple of *Mater Matuta*⁸²; additionally, it has been supposed that maps of Italy existed already when Cato wrote the *Origines*, which seem to presuppose a visual representation of the peninsula in front of the author⁸³. Considered this, it is important to underline that the ‘traditional’ hypothesis of a realization of a map in 268 BCE, when the temple was constructed, to celebrate ‘the conquest of Italy’, does not convince at all⁸⁴. This date seems to be excessively ancient to presuppose the existence of a clear concept of Italy, and the temple was built not only in a moment in which the Romans could barely claim to have conquered Italy, but also not as offering after successful wars⁸⁵. On the other side, there are no certain clues to date the realization of the map in 56-54 BCE, when Cicero restored the temple, as it has recently been proposed⁸⁶, also because the dramatic date of Varro’s dialogue is placed earlier than that, and the author would therefore have created an

not (*contra* G. 2.151-52) free of poisonous plants and snakes”. On the Virgilian *laus Italiae*, see also Thomas (1982) 39-49.

⁷⁸ See e.g. Serv. *ad Georg.* 2.136: *iam incipit laus Italiae quam exsequitur secundum praecepta rhetorica: nam dicit eam et habere omnia bona et carere malis universis.*

⁷⁹ See Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming).

⁸⁰ Whittaker (1994) 32.

⁸¹ Varr. *RR* 1.2.1. See Nicolet (1988) 110. Guilhembet (2005)’s idea, that in the temple of *Tellus* there could be a map of the entire *oikoumene* (54), is based only on the fact that Varro deals with Italy in relation to its temperate climate and does not convince in face of Varro’s clear statement, as Le Bris (2007) 76-77, has successfully shown.

⁸² Liv. 41.28.10.

⁸³ Williams (2001) 35-38.

⁸⁴ So Williams (2001) 37.

⁸⁵ Le Bris (2007) 76.

⁸⁶ Guilhembet (2005); Le Bris (2007).

anachronism. The question must therefore simply stay open: in the Late Republic this map surely showed in figurative form Italy as a defined region, with a clear role in the general balance of the Empire⁸⁷, and it also could have been realized one hundred years before Varro's mention of it.

Indeed, it is possible to date the existence of such an idea of centrality of Italy earlier than the Late Republic. Polybius underlines the advantages of Italy, i.e. its richness in resources, as, next to the constitution, one of the reasons of Roman success, which allowed the Romans to conquer the entire known world⁸⁸: there is already a defined idea of a clear difference of this geographical area (the conquerors) — independently from its administrative nature — from all the rest of the Roman *imperium* (the conquered). Such a difference was connected to Italy's history, its nearness to Rome, its geographical nature, all the elements, indeed, which will be relevant in the construction of the *laudes Italiae*. These are not fully developed yet in Polybius' work, and as a genre they will appear much later, but clearly present are some of the rhetorical elements which will compose them and the idea of the importance of Italy in guaranteeing the success of Rome⁸⁹. While it is hard, as always, to understand how relevant can Polybius be in understanding Roman mentality, it is important to underline that such *topoi* on Italy are unknown otherwise to the Greek literature of this period (and until Strabo), and could therefore with some probability represent the discourses on the Italian landscape which the author heard in Rome. In any case, Polybius allows us to recognize that the idea of a difference and a privileged position of Italy were already existing in the first half of the second century BCE, and in this moment Italy had already acquired a marker of centrality.

Even earlier, a clear statement of Italy's centrality is the definition of Italy as the only region of the world where *ager Romanus* could be found. This, being the territory more directly connected to Rome itself

⁸⁷ These considerations are all valid even if, as thought by Brodersen (1995) 152-155, what was represented was not a map but a personification of Italy, which would in any case underline the identification of the peninsula as a 'unit', a region, as well as of its 'central' importance in the economy of the Empire. Palombi's idea [(1997) 167] that a representation of Italy in the time of Cicero would be anachronistic is meaningless, since Italy, a part of Empire, had acquired a role and an identity which allowed its representation without other regions, independently from Cicero's specific political program (which is discussed in this sense by Le Bris (2007) 77).

⁸⁸ Polyb. 6.50.6.

⁸⁹ For a more detailed discussion on this, see Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming).

and constituting her direct surroundings, as the etymology itself shows, was — in Richardson's definition — a “sacred heartland of the Roman people”⁹⁰. The fact that only Italy could host land with such a nature, as it was formally decided in 210 BCE⁹¹, but probably had always been valid earlier in practice⁹², is a perfect statement of the central nature of Italy, deriving from its direct geographical and historical vicinity to Rome and to a general concentric scheme where the nearness to the center becomes a variable of value, as well as of the necessity, at the end of the third century BCE, of formalizing it in legislative form, in front of the change caused by the birth of the provincial system, and generally by the expansion of the ‘imperial Republic’.

Surely, it is important to underline that the birth of such discursive strategies must have been a process, and not a sudden development. Through the Tarentine, the Gallic and the Second Punic War, Rome realized the importance of the Italian allies and of their fidelity for the survival of the Roman State, and this can only have increasingly favored the development of an idea of Italian centrality. The construction of this image of ‘double centrality’ (of Rome and of Italy) was not without consequences for the general geographic perception of the *imperium* and for the development of identities inside it. Exalting a center means also homogenizing both the center and what is outside it. On the one side, qualifying Italy as centre and as ‘different’ territory had to necessarily lead to a weakening of the internal subdivisions and to the strengthening of the regional ‘image’ of the peninsula. At the same time this implied in a sort of virtuous circle an always stronger and clearer differentiation from the Outside⁹³.

WHERE IS THE CENTER OF ROME?

Rome, in its role as *caput mundi*, is somehow ‘all center’: as Aelius Aristides formulates it, “wherever in the city one is, nothing prevents him from being in its center (*mesos*) all the same”⁹⁴. Nonetheless, it is worth asking, if Rome is the center of the world, what and where is the center of Rome.

⁹⁰ Richardson (2011) 190.

⁹¹ Liv. 27.5.15. See De Libero (1994) 311-312. On the situation leading to his definition, see Pina Polo (2011) 188-189.

⁹² Konrad (2008).

⁹³ See on all this Carlà-Uhink (forthcoming).

⁹⁴ Aristid. 26.7; transl. C.A. Behr.

The center of a city, following Roland Barthes⁹⁵, can assume two possible forms, either as culminant point of activity (a particular one or a sum of them), or even a sort of empty image which is the focus of a projection created by the community, organizing around itself the rest of the city⁹⁶. “In the ancient world — added Ammermann — a civic center was not only a place where the citizens of a city-state regularly came together to participate in its political life but it was also a space that played a leading role in the self-definition of the polis. And the matter of identity often became entwined with the elaboration of legends about the center and how the city-state itself began its life”⁹⁷.

In the Roman tradition, the history of the city began on the Palatine, where Romulus took his auspices and founded his settlement⁹⁸, and there we have to identify the first center of the city. Indeed, there have been found the traces of the first wall of the settlement, dated by Andrea Carandini to the mid-eighth century BCE, and therefore fitting with the traditional dating of the city foundation⁹⁹. The Palatine must therefore be probably recognized as the point in which around the second half of the eighth century BCE the perception of Rome as a community began to be distinctly shaped. Already before the discovery of the wall, on the other side, the existence of “an embryonic state structure” on the complex Palatine-Capitoline-Forum in the eighth century had already been convincingly suggested¹⁰⁰.

Independently from the fact that the Palatine might have indeed been the locality where the city of Rome was originally founded, nevertheless, much more relevant to the topic of this article is the fact that the Romans themselves, in the following centuries, recognized it as such and attributed to the Palatine the role of the chronological first ‘center of Rome’. There they recognized the structure they identified with Romulus’ hut (and with

⁹⁵ Barthes (1970) 374.

⁹⁶ See also Arnheim (1988) 114.

⁹⁷ Ammermann (2011) 256.

⁹⁸ E.g. Liv. 1.7.3; Jos. *Ant. Jud.* 19.3.2; Tac. *Ann.* 12.24; Gell. *NA* 13.14.

⁹⁹ It is not possible to reopen here the entire debate about this wall and its meaning (see e.g. Carandini’s answers to his many critics in Carandini (2006) 434-453) — it will be enough to stress its relevance in revealing the existence of a ‘community’, which aimed to mark physically their topographic extension, while it is probably too far-fetched trying to interpret it with certainty as the original *pomerium*, as Liou-Gille (1993) 95 did. It is clear that it is impossible to reconstruct religious rites or ideas connected with this wall, even if it is presumable that they existed: Grandazzi (1995) 58-59.

¹⁰⁰ Guidi (1982) in particular 284-285.

Faustulus' hut, in which Romulus and Remus grew up). In this sense, for instance, Tacitus insists that Romulus drew the original *pomerium* around this hill, and here the *Lupercalia* provided every year a celebration of this 'original settlement'; Josephus Flavius confirms that the Palatine was where Rome began¹⁰¹.

An identification of the Palatine as the first 'nucleus' of Rome is also recognizable in the — very complicated — tradition concerning the *Roma Quadrata*, a concept whose meaning is very unclear and seems to have shifted over time. In the earliest sources, and especially in Ennius' *Annals* (4.150 Skutsch), the term seems to identify the entire city, the Romulean foundation, and place it on the Palatine¹⁰². A lot has been written to explain this name, understood for instance by the Greek authors as meaning "square" and as referring to the fact that the Romulean *pomerium* around the Palatine had a more-or-less square shape¹⁰³, or, by some modern scholars, who interpret so Varro's definition (*ad aequilibrium posita*) as referring to the "division in four" caused by tracing the *cardo* and the *decumanum*¹⁰⁴. According to Musti, *Roma Quadrata*, originally the archaic city on the Palatine, would experience a "crisis" starting with the time of Varro, who expanded the Romulean city extensively — and still included in it the area of the Temple of Apollo (or better of its *silva*), the Palatine¹⁰⁵. At a later moment, a further elaboration, still present at the beginning of the third century CE¹⁰⁶, identified in the *Roma Quadrata* a pit. The act of creating the city implied, indeed, according to some authors, also fixing the central point of irradiation by digging a hole in the ground and throwing into it offers to the gods¹⁰⁷. Festus identifies as such a point on the Palatine, in front of Apollo's temple, which he defines *Roma Quadrata*, "where have been placed those things which are usually

¹⁰¹ Varr. *LL* 5.54.1; Liv. 1.5.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.79.11; Jos. *Ant. Iud.* 9.3.2; Plut. *Rom.* 20.4; Tac. *Ann.* 12.24. See also Edwards (1996) 31-35.

¹⁰² Against Skutsch, Grandazzi (1993) 497-501 suggests to place this fragment in the first book of the *Annals*.

¹⁰³ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.88; Plut. *Rom.* 9.4. Cf. also App. *Bas.* 1a.9.

¹⁰⁴ Solin. 1.17-18; Szabó (1956); Grandazzi (1993) 534-353. See also Musti (1975) 313.

¹⁰⁵ Musti (1975) 310-311; 316-318.

¹⁰⁶ *CIL* VI 32327. *POxy* XVII 2088, very fragmentary, could also be compatible with this reading, or with Varro's image of a 'bigger' *Roma Quadrata*, including the Palatine. See Musti (1975) 308; Grandazzi (1993) 507-512.

¹⁰⁷ On the relationship between 'centre' and 'circumference' on a symbolic level, see Toulze (1993) 91-93.

used in the act of foundation of a city for good omen”¹⁰⁸. Nonetheless, Festus quotes in support of his reading Ennius’ *Annals*. Many scholars have considered that he misunderstood the poet — but Mastrocinque has correctly highlighted that Festus and his source (Verrius Flaccus?) did know the entire poem, while we have only a few fragments, often transmitted in a bad shape¹⁰⁹. He therefore goes on arguing that all the sources about the *Roma Quadrata*, including Ennius, in the end refer to a small square sacred area, placed since the first century BCE on the Palatine, inside which was the foundation pit mentioned by Festus. Varro alludes to the same area, from the temple of Apollo to Cacus’ stairs, which is a small distance, around 50 meters¹¹⁰; Dionysius and Appian would have, according to this reconstruction, misunderstood the term and connected it to the entirety of the Romulean foundation¹¹¹. The most relevant aspect here, in any case, is that all the different traditions and interpretations connect the *Roma Quadrata* with the most archaic history of the city and with the Palatine.

More considerations are possible on Festus and his foundation pit, independently from its name, even if discussing the difference between this pit, mentioned by Ovid, too¹¹², and the one described by Plutarch, situated near the Comitium, and by him defined *mundus*¹¹³, would lead here too far¹¹⁴. Put simply, it is a widely diffused idea that there were two different *mundi*, since Plutarch’s foundation pit has nothing to do with the ‘real’ *mundus*, which, near the Ara Saturni, in the Forum, put into communication our world with the *inferi*, and was in the center of different religious rites¹¹⁵. The word *mundus* was surely used by ancient sources

¹⁰⁸ Fest. s.v. *Roma Quadrata* (310.35-312.2 L). See also Ovid. *Fast.* 821-824, with no hints for a localization.

¹⁰⁹ Also Grandazzi (1993) 501-503 thinks that Verrius Flaccus quoted Ennius appropriately, but he thinks that the expression indicated both the foundation pit and either the entire city or at least the entire Palatine (this would be the meaning in Ennius). Ennius would have indicated through the foundation pit, metonymically, the Palatine or Rome.

¹¹⁰ Grandazzi (1993) 503-507 argues that this area indicates in Varro, too, metonymically, the entire city.

¹¹¹ Mastrocinque (1998) 681-684; 692-695.

¹¹² Ov. *Fast.* 4.821-824; *Trist.* 3.1.31-32.

¹¹³ Plut. *Rom.* 11.2

¹¹⁴ On this problem see e.g. Castagnoli (1951); Magdelain (1976); Coarelli (1976-1977) 358-360 and 365-368 (against the idea of the two *mundi*); Catalano (1978) 462-464; Castagnoli (1985); Mastrocinque (1998); Benoist (2011) 37.

¹¹⁵ Plutarch is probably wrong in calling *mundus* this foundation pit, and the etymological connection between *mundus*, “world”, and the *ius pomerii proferendi*, as suggested by Hänger (2001) 89, is simply impossible to maintain, in consideration of the complete

for this latter pit, and the term would have thus been used by Plutarch only in an inappropriate way. It is nonetheless interesting to underline that next to the Ara Saturni (and therefore near the Comitium), was also the *Umbilicus Urbis*, a monument mentioned only in later literary sources, which therefore has been considered for a long time a late antique construction, maybe to be attributed to Constantine¹¹⁶. Archaeological studies, however, have on the contrary demonstrated that this *monopteros* containing an *omphalos* must date at least into the last quarter of the second century BCE. The topographical connection with the Ara Saturni could indeed hint at an even more ancient origin of the monument: therefore it has been convincingly suggested that this structure corresponds to the *sacellum Ditis* of the literary sources, i.e. to the *mundus*¹¹⁷.

The identification of *Umbilicus* and *mundus* would not necessarily imply, as Coarelli thought, that Plutarch was right in identifying the *mundus* and the “foundation pit”, but could explain better the origin of his mistake (Plutarch would have misunderstood the other pit for the *mundus*, considering the nature of *Umbilicus* of the latter), and in any case gives us a further important symbol of centrality in the Roman tradition. For our purposes, it will be enough to underline that already in the ancient world it was perceived necessary to introduce in the act of foundation not only the delimitation of the city limits but also the creation of the pivot of the city, then of the Empire and therefore of the world¹¹⁸. This would only be reinforced if we accept Brodersen’s convincing argument, that the *Umbilicus* and the *miliarium aureum* were not two different monuments, standing at the two opposite corners of the *Rostra*, but one and the same, at the northern corner¹¹⁹. In this case, the same point, monumentalized in the Republican times, and afterwards by Augustus and again later on, would represent at the same time the center of Rome and the center of the entire world.

absence of such a name in the Latin sources, and especially in consideration of the existence of a completely different pit, surely called *mundus*, with a radically different etymology. Such spots which allow communication between different dimensions and spheres have generally the character of a sacral center: Eliade (1952) 59.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Roscher (1913) 35.

¹¹⁷ Coarelli (1976-1977) 360-365; Verzar (1976-1977). Coarelli (375) proposes a dating at the end of the seventh - beginning of the sixth century BCE.

¹¹⁸ Roscher (1918) 86-89. See Della Volpe (1992) 95-97, for a theory explaining the birth of the first boundaries of the households with the religious rites connected with the center of it, the family hearth, thus genetically uniting center and borders around the idea of belonging and of property. See also 102-111.

¹¹⁹ Brodersen (1995) 259-260; Brodersen (1996-97) 280-281.

However, the center does not need necessarily to be only one, and Rome is a very good example of this, as it has already been underlined by different scholars: inside the center, a network of centers also helps to express the multifunctionality of the central place itself (the political center can be different from the religious one and so on)¹²⁰. Even less, does the center/do the centers need to stay always firm in the course of the history of one culture. In Republican times, indeed, the Palatine was not the only center of Rome, and actually not even the most visible and ‘most important’ one. In most cases, it was rather identified with the ‘archaic center’, the ‘old’ one. In spite of its connection with foundation legends, and its importance for some specific cultic aspects — most notably the presence on this hill of the temples of Victoria and Magna Mater, the latter containing after 191 BCE the stone brought in 204 BCE from Pessinus as a *pignus* for the victory in the Second Punic War after a consultation of the Sibylline books¹²¹ — the Palatine did not assume indeed the clear value of space organization, on imperial level, which was taken over by another spot: the Capitoline. Even if the Capitoline is not extraneous to the foundation legend, as there is located the asylum where Romulus would have received the refugees who will constitute the population of Rome¹²², it is, according to Roman traditions and cultural memory, with the political upset consisting in the end of the monarchy and in the beginning of the Republic (traditional date 510-509 BCE) that it became the most important spot inside the *Urbs*.

This event is connected in the sources with the inauguration of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline: the temple, dedicated also to Juno and Minerva, would have been founded by Tarquinius Priscus, built throughout the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, but inaugurated in the first year of the Republic¹²³ — and it will be for the entire Republican period the real sacral and symbolic center of the city¹²⁴. Explicit is in this sense Cicero’s formulation: *sedem urbis atque imperi, denique hoc templum Iovis Optimi Maximi atque hanc arcem omnium gentium*¹²⁵. Tacitus

¹²⁰ Thein (2014) 290.

¹²¹ Liv. 29.10.4-8; Ov. *Fast.* 4.255-347.

¹²² Liv. 1.8.5.

¹²³ E.g. Liv. 1.55; 2.8.6-8; Tac. *Hist.* 3.72.

¹²⁴ E.g. Piccaluga (1974) 210-211; Torregaray Pagola (2006) 247-248. The eventual existence on the Capitoline of forms of cult before the construction of the temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva is not relevant for our aims.

¹²⁵ Cic. *Leg. Agr.* 1.18.

calls it *pignus imperii* and considers the fire which destroyed it in 68 CE as a terrible omen, almost as a sign of the end of the Empire¹²⁶. Still Isidore of Sevilla will say, in explaining Latin etymologies, that *Capitolium Romae vocatum eo quod fuerit Romanae urbis et religionis caput summum*¹²⁷. The Roman tradition, connecting the inauguration of the temple with the birth of the Republic, as Piccaluga has shown, made substantially of the *Capitolium* the marker of the passage from the mythical to the historical time¹²⁸, the founding element of the State and its institutions and the warrant of its survival.

Here is the already mentioned *caput Oli*, here is the god Terminus, included in the temple, who must warrant for the respect of the boundaries¹²⁹. The god, residing on the hill since its first *sacellum* had been built, according to the tradition, by Titus Tatius or by Numa¹³⁰, could not be moved when the temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva was built, and his ‘refusal’ is one of the most famous myths in Roman religion¹³¹. As Piccaluga as shown, this is the *saxum ingens* that was in Tacitus’ report in the center of the reconstruction of the Capitoline temple under Vespasian, and was generally falsely interpreted as “foundation stone”¹³². It is not a surprise that the god of the boundaries, and therefore of territorial, and thus social and political, order, is placed in the very symbolic center of Roman power, from where it can ‘irradiate’ its might¹³³. The boundaries are in their turn themselves the sign of the passage from the ‘prehistoric’ age of Saturn, which did not know them, to the ordered and ruled ‘historical’ period, and their introduction is attributed, among others, to Jupiter¹³⁴ — their overview is thus a function that belongs to the center, as Livy is perfectly aware of when he defines the refusal of the god to move as a positive sign of stability¹³⁵.

¹²⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 3.72.

¹²⁷ Isid. *Hisp. Etym.* 15.2.31.

¹²⁸ Piccaluga (1974) 254-246.

¹²⁹ E.g. Ov. *Fast.* 2.639-684. On Terminus and his cult, see still Piccaluga (1974).

¹³⁰ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.74; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 18.8; Plut. *Num.* 16; Fest. 505, 20L. See Piccaluga (1974) 169-188; MacCormack (1979) 240-241.

¹³¹ E.g. Liv. 1.55.3-5; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.69.5-6; Ov. *Fast.* 2.667-670; Gell. *NA* 12.6. Piccaluga (1974) 188-201; Piccaluga (1975) 262-263.

¹³² Tac. *Hist.* 4.53. Piccaluga (1974) 125-127.

¹³³ Thein (2014) 291-293.

¹³⁴ E.g. Tibull. 1.3.43-44; Sen. *Phaedr.* 527-529.

¹³⁵ Liv. 1.55.5.

On the same spot was revered also *Fides*¹³⁶, not only a divine personification of central meaning in maintaining the relationships among citizens, but also a main concept in Roman external policies — once more her cult on the Capitoline shows the centrality of this point in the administration of the entire *imperium*. In relation to the structure of the Empire, it is important indeed to underline the centrality of the Capitoline in the definition of the relationships between Rome and the client States: Cicero explicitly states that Ptolemy XII was “not a king, who was extraneous to this *imperium*, but one with whom an alliance appeared to have been concluded on the Capitoline”¹³⁷. While generally embassies coming to Rome left dedications on the Capitoline¹³⁸, in particular the client kings used to pay a visit to the temple. Here they, or their representatives, made sacrifices, and here they dedicated donations, which became therefore monuments of their recognition of Rome’s centrality¹³⁹. In 169 BCE, inhabitants of Pamphilia came to Rome with a gold crown with a value of 20,000 gold coins; they asked to be allowed to deposit it in the Capitoline temple and to deliver a sacrifice, and it was accorded them¹⁴⁰. In 105 BCE Rome accorded a *foedus* to the city of Astypalaia, following a *senatus consultum*. The first text, epigraphically known from a Greek copy, foresaw the deposition of a copy in bronze (even if it is unclear if it was a copy only of the *senatus consultum* or of both texts) on the Capitoline¹⁴¹. The *foedus* explicitly mentions again the erection of a votive offering, an *anathema*, in the Capitoline temple in Rome and in the sanctuary of Athena and Asklepios in Astypalaia, additionally also near the altar of an unknown deity (maybe Zeus) and Rome¹⁴². This is of course nothing typical of Rome only — in most ancient cities treaties would be displayed in a temple; what is at stake here is the definition of the ‘center of Rome’, in this case in specific relation to politics and international relations.

¹³⁶ Cic. *Off.* 3.104.

¹³⁷ Cic. *Rab. Post.* 6.

¹³⁸ Torregaray Pagola (2006) 248. According to Livy already the Latins would have dedicated here a golden crown when the alliance with Rome after the battle of the Lake Regillus was made (Liv. 2.22.6). On the reception of foreign embassies in Rome, see Coudry (2006) 530-544.

¹³⁹ Braund (1984) 25; Braund (1988) 78-79; Lintott (1993) 32-33. See e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.67-68; 2.5.184.

¹⁴⁰ Liv. 44.14.3.

¹⁴¹ The deposition of a copy of a treaty in the Capitoline temple is indeed very well attested in Republican times: see e.g. Liv. 26.24.14.

¹⁴² IG XII 3173 = RDGE 16.

Nonetheless, once the centrality of Rome within the *oikoumene* has been constructed, the temple in which such display takes place in such center assumes a function superior to that of its analogues in other cities: “here was surely the greatest concentration of signs of conquest even in that ultimate city of conquest, Rome”¹⁴³.

The temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (and his cult) materialized thus in the Republican period the cohesive force holding together the Roman hegemony — as in the Principate will do, with other characters, the imperial cult¹⁴⁴. Dedications to the Roman people and to Jupiter from the Capitoline are indeed also epigraphically very well attested¹⁴⁵. A corpus of sixteen dedications is particularly famous, and had attracted already the attention of Mommsen. Lintott has convincingly argued that the inscriptions are not all contemporary, even if they were built in one single monument, “which acquired a succession of inscriptions at the behest of foreign embassies over a longer period from c. 100 to c. 60”, or better (following Mellor’s suggestion), on which inscriptions dedicated on the Capitoline in previous decades were re-inscribed after the fire of 83 BCE¹⁴⁶. Such a monument therefore ‘collected’ these older inscriptions and so aimed to materialize in the point perceived as the center of the entire world the homage of the States and the kings constituting the Roman *imperium*. Not by chance, in 78 BCE a senatorial decree ordered the consuls to put in the Capitoline temple a bronze copy of the *formula amicorum*. Suetonius will still write that here were preserved almost from the foundation of the city the *senatus consulta* and the plebiscites connected to alliances and *foedera* and to any privilege awarded to someone¹⁴⁷. The fact that the triumphal procession, which also passed around the Palatine, led to the Capitoline and to its temple was a direct spatial manifestation of its centrality for the entire *imperium* — thus for the entire *oikoumene*¹⁴⁸. From the Capitoline the consuls departed for their provinces, with a procession leading them and the army to one of the city gates¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴³ Edwards (1996) 71.

¹⁴⁴ Braund (1984) 114. See also Purcell (2007) 186-188.

¹⁴⁵ Degraffi (1951-1952).

¹⁴⁶ Lintott (1978); Mellor (1978) 328-330; Lintott (1993) 180; Battistoni (2010) 186-194 (with the text of all sixteen inscriptions). See also Kallet-Marx (1995) 287-289.

¹⁴⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 8.

¹⁴⁸ Hölkeskamp (2001) 108-111.

¹⁴⁹ Pina Polo (2011) 215-216.

However, the universal and unlimited validity of the Capitoline as a center is not only true in space, but, as it often happens with such centers, also in time: Horace's monument, as it is well known, was more lasting than bronze and should last "as long as the *pontifex* will climb together with the silent virgin the Capitoline"¹⁵⁰. Not only Terminus had to be included in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but *Juventas*, too¹⁵¹; "the cult of the goddess of youth was linked to the life-cycle of the citizen body, for on assumption of the *toga virilis* the family of each young adult male deposited a fixed sum of money in her treasury on the Capitol"¹⁵². The cult of *Juventas* on this spot was thus a way of symbolizing the eternity of Roman power through its successive generations. The Capitoline marked indeed strongly also the scansion of the life of Roman citizens, as well as the continuity of civil and military life: here happened, next to the assumption of the *toga virilis*, the call to arms¹⁵³. Here the magistrates entered their offices and here was held the first session of the Senate every consular year, indicating the continuous endless renewal of the Roman State¹⁵⁴. The control of the sacral center over time was additionally clear in the ceremony of the *clavus annalis*, which made of the Capitoline Temple the marker of the regular course of the years; in analogous way the calendar was marked also in Volsinii in the temple of Nortia¹⁵⁵. The main problem in understanding this tradition consists, as historians have always recognized, in the clear compresence of two different traditions: one connected to the nail as marker of the regular course of time, the other one to "extraordinary nails" which were fixed in occasion of epidemics or in similar emergencies¹⁵⁶. Pina Polo has recently proposed to see in this rite an apotropaic expiatory ritual, which only secondarily assumed a value in calculating the years; this does not change the significance of the fact that such a rite, of central importance for the survival of the entire community over time, and later of central importance in measuring the temporal extension of Rome and its Empire, took place on the Capitoline¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁰ Hor. *Od.* 3.30.8-9. See Edwards (1996) 86-88.

¹⁵¹ Liv. 5.54.7; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.69.5; 4.15.5.

¹⁵² Thein (2014) 292.

¹⁵³ Pina Polo (2011) 84-85.

¹⁵⁴ Schilling (1949) 31-32; Piccaluga (1974) 239-240; Pina Polo (2011) 17-22.

¹⁵⁵ Liv. 7.3; Fest. 49L. On Etruscan rites see Aigner Foresti (1979) 146-147.

¹⁵⁶ Toutain (1915-1918) in particular 56-60; Heurgon (1964) 432-434; Aigner Foresti (1979) 144-146; Dungworth (1998) 153.

¹⁵⁷ Pina Polo (2011) 35-40, but see already Toutain (1915-1918) 68-71. Aigner Foresti (1979) 147-149 had proposed the opposite solution: the original function of the nail should

As underlined by Thein, “the Capitol was a symbol of Roman world rule because it was a ‘central place’ par excellence in the symbolic topography of the city”¹⁵⁸. But if the temple was built in the sixth century BCE, as archaeological finds confirm, and Roman sources attribute to that moment and its foundation also the legends constructing its centrality, is it possible to define when such traditions and such perceptions of the Capitoline Temple as center of the Roman rule was developed? It has already been mentioned that the legend of the *caput Oli* must be dated to the third century BCE. A confirmation that the ‘centrality of the Capitoline’ was constructed around that time comes also from an analysis of the birth of the historical tradition about the Gallic invasion of 390 BCE, which should have spared this hill. This tradition is with all probability a later creation, attested for the first time in Polybius and Cassius Hemina¹⁵⁹, since another variant, according to which the Capitoline had indeed been conquered by the Gauls together with the rest of the city, attested e.g. in Ennius¹⁶⁰, seems to be precedent, and could have been already used by Theopompus¹⁶¹. Williams has shown that “the story and the associated idea of the eternity of the Capitol were already in circulation by the late third century”¹⁶²; Horsfall showed that the tradition concerning the geese must predate Fabius Pictor, but there is no reason to actually push it much further back, since an association with the temple of Juno Moneta, built in 345 BCE, does not stand scrutiny¹⁶³. Sordi thus connected the choice of the Capitoline as ‘center of Rome’ in the third century BCE with the birth of the belief that Rome was destined to rule the world¹⁶⁴. The birth of Roman imperialism and the ‘mental revolution’ that with the second half of the third century changed the ways the Romans perceived, understood, constructed space and their political dominion caused the necessity of an always stronger identification of a radiating center. This was set on the Capitoline, whose sacral importance was already huge, and reinforced

have been the one as time-marker, while the apotropaic function should have developed in a second moment. On the apotropaic function see also Poma (1978).

¹⁵⁸ Thein (2014) 289.

¹⁵⁹ Polyb. 2.18.2; App. *Celt.* 6.

¹⁶⁰ E.g. Enn. *Ann.* 7.14 Skutsch; Varr. *Vit. Pop. Rom.* 2.61; Lucan. 5.27-28; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 1.625-626; 4.150-151; 6.555-556, Plut. *Rom.* 17.6-7; Tac. *Ann.* 11. 23 Tert. *Apol.* 40.8. See Skutsch (1953); Skutsch (1978); Horsfall (1981) 298-305.

¹⁶¹ Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 3.57. See Horsfall (1981) 298-299.

¹⁶² Williams (2001) 150-157.

¹⁶³ Horsfall (1981) 307-311.

¹⁶⁴ Sordi (1984) 91.

through legends and historical traditions, which underlined how this spot was destined to be the center of the entire world and how it would be impossible for any invaders to take it. “Much of what appears in the developed tradition of the sack can be better explained with reference to changes in Roman conceptions, religious and historical, rather than as the fruit of literary remodeling”¹⁶⁵. Independently from the legendary traditions concerning its origins in connection with Manlius Capitolinus¹⁶⁶, also the existence of a prohibition for the patricians to live on the Capitoline during the Republican period seems reliable, and could be connected, according to Valvo’s interpretation, with the sacredness acquired by this area in the course of the Republican time — of which these legends are a sign and a by-product¹⁶⁷.

Chronologically speaking, the moment in which the Capitoline acquired its unchallenged importance must be identified therefore at the end of the third — beginning of the second century BCE, i.e. the moment of Rome’s ‘cultural revolution’. It is significant to underline that this chronological frame is the one in which, according to Nicolet, Rome started its transformation from a “normal Mediterranean city” into a “megapolis” (a process identified in its demographic growth, new administrative organization, the composition of the population and its relationship with the political elite, the monumental aspect of the city itself)¹⁶⁸. But this is, additionally, the same moment in which the new concepts of Empire were developing¹⁶⁹, as well as the idea of Italy as a region¹⁷⁰. Once again, the Capitoline was not the only religious center, but the focus of a complex landscape of sacred places and of *lieux de mémoire*¹⁷¹, among which, still, it appeared to have, as in the theories described above, all of the functions of the temples of the lower order with some additional and exclusive ones: the connection to the foundation of the Republic, most of all¹⁷².

¹⁶⁵ Williams (2001) 157.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Liv. 6.20.

¹⁶⁷ Valvo (1984) 92-100. Valvo connects this law with the Gallic invasion at the beginning of the fourth century BCE, but such a connection is impossible to demonstrate with certainty.

¹⁶⁸ Nicolet 2000.

¹⁶⁹ Carlà (forthcoming a).

¹⁷⁰ Carlà (forthcoming b).

¹⁷¹ Hölkeskamp (2001) 105-107.

¹⁷² Hölkeskamp (2001) 118.

It is in any case important to underline that not only the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus constituted the center we are talking about: it was the most important and evident monumental emergence, but the entire Capitoline Hill — meant as union of Capitolium and Arx — formed a sacral and symbolic center. It will be enough to remember that the *fetiales*, in order to conclude a peace treaty, needed to have with them vervain grown on the Arx and given to them by the highest commander (i.e. consul or dictator); so they travelled e.g. with it to Carthage at the end of the Second Punic War¹⁷³.

This centrality of the Capitoline is steady in the Republican time; but with the Augustan period the hill with the temple of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva will have to give way, at least in part, to a Palatine loaded with 'new' symbolic values. Central from this point of view were the rediscovery of the Romulean tradition on the Palatine and consequently the construction of Augustus' palace and of the temple of Apollo¹⁷⁴. As Sablayrolles has well shown, this was particularly important in the Augustan restructuring of the city, given the value attributed to Apollo as personal deity of Augustus, in particular in his role as victorious general, since the temple was vowed in 36 BCE after the battle of Naulochos and dedicated in 28 BCE, and thus connected to the victory at Actium¹⁷⁵. In this temple he ordered in 12 BCE that the Sibylline books be deposited, after an operation of selection and cleansing of prophetic writings — before that moment, they were housed in the Capitoline temple¹⁷⁶. In the *Res Gestae* it is this temple which opens and closes the sequence of sacred buildings¹⁷⁷; the Capitoline temple, which did not of course lose completely its meaning, is the first mentioned in the sequence of restorations. This intervention on the temple is archaeologically not visible and was probably of minor relevance; it opens the list because of the symbolic meaning that this temple still went on having¹⁷⁸.

Once again, the temple of Apollo does not represent the only intervention of Augustus in the religious life of the city of Rome — it is enough

¹⁷³ Liv. 30.43.9.

¹⁷⁴ Hartmann (2010) 525-526.

¹⁷⁵ Sablayrolles (1981) 63-64.

¹⁷⁶ Suet. *Aug.* 31.1. In general, on the temple of Apollo on the Palatine and its meaning for Augustus, with considerations on this episode concerning the Sibylline books, too, see Egelhaaf-Gaiser (2007) 214-218.

¹⁷⁷ *RGDA* 19: Sablayrolles (1981) 70.

¹⁷⁸ *RGDA* 20: Sablayrolles (1981) 70-71.

to think of the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum and its meaning for the Augustan self-representation — nor did the Palatine temple completely obscure any other cult place of the Urbs. Nonetheless a form of ‘contrast’ between Augustus, who also built on the Capitoline a second temple to Jupiter as *Jupiter Tonans*, and the Capitoline god is also visible from a passage in Suetonius’ biography, according to which the god appeared to the Emperor in a dream to complain about the fact that he wanted to take away from him believers, and inducing Augustus to a new architectural change in the temple of *Jupiter Tonans*¹⁷⁹. The Principate re-evaluated then the Palatine, seat of Romulus, and now of the Emperor, as center of the city¹⁸⁰, even if the importance of the Capitoline Hill, still central in many religious and political rituals, could not be denied. It is in this context that must be read the very few pieces of information we have about a second hut of Romulus, placed on the Capitoline Hill, which is attested only from the Augustan age (in Vitruvius, 2.35) until 78 CE¹⁸¹, and which might have been a replica of the Palatine one; according to Balland it was exactly a product of the Augustan “acquisition” of the Romulean memories and of the “quite tense dialogue” (“un dialogue un peu tendu”) which the déplacement of the political center of Rome from the Palatine to the Capitoline had created¹⁸². Augustus did not, of course, empty the Capitoline of any and every meaning, but operated a shift, with a clear new focus on the Palatine. It does not surprise, therefore, to find in Suetonius’ biography of Caligula the expression “Capitoline and Palatine” to indicate as synecdoche the entire city of Rome¹⁸³.

There were then, in the course of Roman history, two important elements in the definition of the center of Rome, from the archaic period to the Early Principate (with which this short analysis stops): a shift in the identification of the symbolic main civic center, which moved from a presumable original Palatine collocation to the Capitoline, then back to the

¹⁷⁹ Suet. *Aug.* 91.2. The temple is of course also mentioned in the list of buildings provided by *RGDA* 19. See Sablayrolles (1981) 68.

¹⁸⁰ Dio 53.16.5: “The royal residence is called Palatium, not because it was ever decreed that this should be its name, but because Caesar dwelt on the Palatine and had his military headquarters there, though his residence gained a certain degree of fame from the mount as a whole also, because Romulus had once lived there” (transl. E. Cary). See Balland (1984) 62-66.

¹⁸¹ In *CIL* XVI 22. A further mention in Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.10 seems to be rather anti-quarian. See Balland (1984) 60-61; Edwards (1996) 35-43.

¹⁸² Balland (1984) 67.

¹⁸³ Suet. *Cal.* 46.

Palatine. Such processes are not extremely easy to reconstruct since, as Ammermann has made clear, a movement of the center is not remembered as such by the community¹⁸⁴: the center must have, as it has already been mentioned, properties of fixity in time and space and of immunity to historical change that make it incompatible with a shift. Therefore such movements, which indeed happen, are objects of cultural processes of de-memorization, or rather are presented as ‘recovery’ of an even older center: such was Augustus’ re-evaluation of the Palatine based on its Romulean memories.

In every moment the city of Rome was characterized in the end by a multiplicity of centers, in part from previous historical phases, in part with different functions, which shape the center of the world in the end as — in itself — a network of centers, something that would not stop with Antiquity.

CONCLUSIONS

The connection of this concept with the broader structure of Roman ‘spatial concepts’ may help us in formulating some final ideas about the development of the idea of Roman centrality. First of all, the idea of centrality is connected to the spatial constructions and concepts developed in concomitance with the Roman expansion, the birth of the Roman *imperium* and of its administrative structure. Additionally, the centrality of Italy presupposes the birth of the provincial system, of which it is a consequence: the idea of a different nature of the ‘Italian soil’ in respect to other parts of the Empire falls also in the same context of the definition of the provinces and of their geographical and juridical structures. It seems therefore that the idea of an Italian region and that of its centrality as the region surrounding Rome and differentiated from the provinces must have developed contemporaneously. The birth and development of this concept must therefore be dated to the second half of the third — first half of the second century BCE, the moment in which, according to Polybius, the Romans realized they could dominate the entire world¹⁸⁵ — and the moment in which this fundamental ‘revolution’ in their spatial perspective was concretized also in the structuring of the concept of frontier

¹⁸⁴ Edwards 2002, pp. 62-68; Ammermann 2011, p. 259.

¹⁸⁵ Polyb. 1.6.6-8.

and in the consolidation, in the city, of the function of the Capitoline as center of the world.

An analysis of the structuration of centrality and its related concepts allows us therefore to add a further important element in the complex recognition, in the period going from the end of the First Punic War to the Macedonian Wars, of a moment of central change of mentalities in Roman culture — a change which, developing new spatial concepts, allowed and legitimated Roman expansion, as Polybius recognized, confirming and perpetuating the development of Roman imperialism.

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ASELLIUS SABINUS: CULTURE, WIT, AND POWER IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF GASTRONOMY

Abstract: A highly speculative biography of a man about whom we know almost nothing might read as follows. Asellius Sabinus was born sometime in the latter half of the first century BC and he died in the 30s AD. His family was senatorial, they and he flourished under and through the patronage of Augustus and Tiberius, and he moved easily in aristocratic circles. He was wealthy. His culture was that of the intellectual and social elite of his day. His aristocratic wit was considered the height of sophistication by a most knowledgeable critic. He was committed to real oratory, even to the point of teaching it, but indulged as well in the contemporary craze for the imaginary, that is, in competitive declamation. He had a sincere interest in food and its preparation, another passion of the day. And he conveyed that interest in a gastronomic poem replete with epic overtones, a clever parody which both satirized and enshrined that passion. The poem (not a word of which survives) was a serious literary creation with a long pedigree, a work both refined and erudite, and it was handsomely rewarded by another most knowledgeable critic. In person he was charming and urbane, a Noel Coward *avant la lettre*.

“Variegated by origin, habits, and style, the declaimers formed a noisy menagerie. ... For some, declamation became a way of life, not a training for the law courts, where a paladin of the schools might fail miserably. It also furnished social betterment, and the chance of notoriety and promotion. Of the performers registered by Seneca, the majority are small town careerists, with few senators or sons of senators. Many of them were crude and brutal in style and argument.”¹

In his *Controversiae* the Elder Seneca vividly recalled scores of declaimers whose *sententiae*, good and bad, he remembered so well. He seldom failed to criticize even the best of them, often acerbically. Yet there was one in whom he openly delighted, Sabinus, *urbanissimus homo*, the most urbane of men, and *venustissimus inter rhetores scurra*, the most charming of wits among the rhetors. His only censure of the man, leveled twice, was that he could not resist a joke.²

¹ Syme (1986a) 354. My thanks for comment to R.A. Kaster, J.T. Katz, M. Peachin, B.D. Shaw, and A.J. Woodman. I have profited from the good advice of many anonymous readers for journals over the years, but none has been more helpful than the referee for this paper.

² *Scurra* is of course here “wit”, not “buffoon”.

Urbanissimus homo: Controversiae [hereafter *C*] 9.41.17. *Venustissimus ... scurra: Suasoriae* [hereafter *S*] 2.12. Ill-timed jokes: *Illud non probavi, quod multa in re severa*

Seneca does not ascribe *urbanitas* lightly — indeed he does not award the quality to any other declaimer at all — but Sabinus reminds him of it no fewer than three times (*urbanissimus*, *urbanitate*, *urbanas res*). *Urbanitas* is elegance, sophistication, refinement — in a word urbanity, civilization, the very antithesis of the rustic and the foreign — and it is frequently expressed through wit. It routinely conveys an attitude of superiority, even of arrogance. An urbane joke is more often than not exclusive, an in-joke: indeed it is often an insult, a zinger. But in Seneca's friend *urbanitas* is combined with *venustas*, charm. The man was a jester but his jokes were charming and they usually did not sting.³

He first appears in a long and curious digression very late in the *Controversiae*, at 9.4.17-21. We are listening to the elderly Seneca as he dictates rapidly, quoting and misquoting from memory. His thoughts tumble out, his Latin is often awkward, frequently obscure, and notably repetitious. A literal translation might look like this:⁴

(17) I remember this *controversia*⁵ being declaimed well also by Asilius Sabinus. "Describe," he said, "describe the slaying of the tyrant and your being escorted from the citadel with enormous glory. O you paricide, if you do not understand, even after the tyrannicide, how much more honorably your brother died than you slew."

What I did not approve was that he tried to speak wittily in a serious context. But he was a most urbane man, as I have often told you, so that whatever was lacking to him in eloquence he made up for in urbanity.

(18) I remember that when Vallius Syriacus, a fluent man, was prosecuting and seemed likely to undergo a charge of bringing a false accusation, he [Sabinus] appeared with a sad visage around the spectators

temptavit salse dicere (C 9.4.17); *cum movisset homines et flebili oratione et diserta, redit tamen ad sales* ... (9.4.21).

³ Quintilian discusses a list of nouns and adjectives conveying various aspects of humor at *IO* 6.3.17-21: *urbanitas*, *venustus*, *salsus*, *facetis*, *iocus*, *dicacitas*. *Urbanitas* implies city words, tones, usage, and the assumption of tacit erudition in the conversation of learned men. *Venustus* describes something acted or spoken with grace, charm, and wit. (The evolution of the word and its meanings is splendidly set out at Krostenko (2001) 40-51, 99-111, 308-309.) The rare combination of *urbanitas* and *venustus* in wit has a distinctly Ciceronian flavor, as in *De Domo* 92 and *De Oratore* 2.228, cf. 1.17: also at Catullus 22.2; but not elsewhere.

⁴ The text here is that of Håkanson (1989). Winterbottom's graceful English translation (also 1989) is far more elegant than Seneca's Latin.

⁵ "Who shall have struck his father, let his hands be cut off. A tyrant summoned a father and his two sons to the citadel; he ordered the young men to beat the father. One threw himself down, the other performed the beating. Afterwards he was accepted into the tyrant's friendship, he slew the tyrant, and he accepted a reward. His hands are sought; his father defends."

at the trial, and whenever he ran into Syriacus (who was moving about) he would enquire what his hopes were. Then after the trial, when Syriacus thanked him because he had shown such concern for him, "By Hercules," he said, "I was afraid that we would have one more rhetor." And once, brought as a witness, when he was asked whether he had received [...] sesterces from the other side, he said that he had received them. Did he have them? He said he did not know. Then, when asked whether he had a charge of bringing a false accusation, "You," he said, "are familiar with my carelessness: I do not know whether I have it, but I know that I received it."

And against Domitius, a man of most noble birth who during his consulship had built baths overlooking the Sacred Way and then had begun to go around the rhetors and declaim, "I," he said, "knew that you would do this, and I said to your mother when she complained of your laziness: [in Greek] first swimming, then letters."

(19) I cannot pass by two of his urbane actions.

He had accompanied the proconsul Occius Flamma to the province of Crete. The Greeks began to demand in the theater that Sabinus should undertake the highest magistracy. Now it is the custom for the magistrates of the Cretans to let their beard and hair grow. Sabinus got up and imposed silence with a gesture. Then he said, "I have twice undertaken this magistracy in Rome." For he had twice pleaded a case as a defendant. The Greeks did not understand, but they blessed Caesar and requested that Sabinus also undertake that office a third time. (20) Afterwards the entire cohort of companions then offended them. They were attacked in the temple by the whole crowd, which demanded that Sabinus should go to Rome with Turdus (he was among the most infamous and hated men). When Turdus promised to go, so that he might get out of there, Sabinus imposed silence and said, "I am not about to go to Caesar with a tidbit." Afterwards it was brought up against Sabinus when he was pleading his case. I remember the man spoke fluently when he had been brought from prison into the senate to ask that he might receive his daily rations. Then he said, complaining of hunger, "I do not seek anything burdensome from you, but that you decide that I either die or live." He also said this, "Do not, I say, listen haughtily to a man of many sorrows: often he who could have pitied begs for pity."

(21) And when he declared that there were wealthy Sejanians in the jail, "Though a man," he said, "not yet sentenced, I beg parricides for bread that I might live." Although he had moved men by a speech both pitiful and fluent, he returned nevertheless to witticisms. He begged to be transferred to the Stone-Quarries, "Not," he said, "that the name Stone-Quarries (*Lautumiae*) might deceive any of you, for the thing is far from sumptuous (*lauta*)."

I have related this both that you might come to know the man himself to some extent, and that you might understand how difficult it was to escape from his own nature. How could it be got from him not to jest in declamations, one who used to

jest amid his troubles and dangers? Who cannot realize that he should not have jested in those circumstances? Who can believe that he was able to do it?

HIS NAME

1. Seneca remembers that the *controversia* under consideration was well declaimed by “Asilius Sabinus”. He is but one of 16 or 17 declaimers recalled as having treated this particular theme, some of them quoted on it as many as four times. Most of them are major and recurring figures in the *Controversiae*, but this is Sabinus’ sole appearance in the work. After reciting two brief sentences from his declamation, Seneca deprecates his inability to resist a joke — but he then recalls five of the man’s jests, none of them relevant to declamation. And then he also recalls three moving passages from an actual speech of appeal delivered by Sabinus to the senate when he was imprisoned on a capital charge. Serious, but equally irrelevant to this declamation, they are rounded off by a fourth extract from the speech, to demonstrate that the joker just could not desist from joking.

2. “Sabinus Asilius” turns up once in Seneca’s *Suasoriae* (2.12), again with a joke, and again remembered with affection, as the most charming of jesters among the rhetors, *venustissimus inter rhetores scurra*.

This raises a small problem. The name “Asilius Sabinus” in the long *Controversiae* passage just quoted above (9.4.17) is a sensible 19th-century emendation, now universally accepted, of a clearly corrupt text, and it is derived from “Sabinus Asilius” in the *Suasoriae*. What the manuscripts of the *Controversiae* in fact offer in 9.4.17 is not “Asilius” but “Tullius” or “Iulius” as the *nomen gentilicium*.⁶ Whether Seneca refers to the same man in both works remains to be determined. The point here is that “Asilius” is in fact attested only once as his *nomen* in Seneca’s writings (in the *Suasoriae*), not twice.

⁶ And seem to suggest that two men are involved, Tullius/Iulius and Sabinus, when they obviously are not. If we were to accept “the extremely corrupt and extremely lacunose paradosis” (so W.S. Watt, *Gnomon* 63 (1991) 315) we would not only be plunged into the briar patch of a seriously faulty manuscript but flung as well into a thicket of prosopographical problems which are posed by two contemporary poets. One of those poets may or may not be “Tullius Sabinus” (the name is problematic) in the *Greek Anthology*; and he in turn might or might not be the other “Sabinus”, a friend of Ovid, who died young. Introductions to them at *PIR*² T 388 and S 35.

3. That observation is relevant to a brief notice in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius* (42.2). The *princeps* awarded 200,000 sesterces to an "Asellius Sabinus" for a dialogue in which he had introduced a contest among a mushroom, a figpecker, an oyster, and a thrush: "Asellius", not "Asilius".

4. Our problem is compounded by the passing mention in another author of a witty criticism leveled by an "Asellius" at the delivery of another orator who happens also to figure prominently in Seneca's *Controversiae*. That is, we have a jest in a rhetorical setting such as one might find in the *Controversiae*, but it is attributed to "Asellius", not "Asilius". Our authority here is none other than Seneca's son — one of the addressees of the *Controversiae* — in his *Letters to Lucilius* (40.9).

5. And then there is a remark, in a letter addressed by the elderly Augustus to his granddaughter, Agrippina, which is cited by Suetonius in his *Life of Gaius* (8.4). In the fragment quoted by the biographer, Augustus informs her that he is sending her son to her. The infant Gaius will travel in the care of Talarium and "Asillius": not "Asilius" or "Asellius", but "Asillius".

Are we dealing with one, two, or three men, and what name or names should we expect? The standard works of reference are remarkably non-committal.⁷ Nevertheless this should one man and he should be called Asellius Sabinus. The case for that supposition is worth setting out.

That Seneca's "Sabinus Asilius" and his "[emended Asilius] Sabinus" are one and the same man should be accepted *prima facie*, as everyone would agree. He is described in the two passages in strikingly complimentary and complementary terms — *urbanissimus homo* (C 9.4.18), *venustissimus scurra* (S 2.12) — indeed behind the repeated praise lies rare and real affection. Much of the passage in the *Controversiae* presents jokes quite irrelevant to Sabinus' eloquence; in the short record in the *Suasoriae* he is called a jokester.

⁷ At *RE* Asellius 3, P. von Rhoden observed simply that the author of the dialogue might be identical with the Asillius of Augustus' letter and with the Asilius Sabinus of Seneca's *Suasoriae* (omitting the mention in the younger Seneca's *Epistulae*). A. Stein's notice at *PIR* ² A 1213 is a masterpiece of prosopographical nuance: after introducing the man of the dialogue rewarded by Tiberius Stein allowed that "he seems to be the same as" the Asilius Sabinus of the *Controversiae* and the *Suasoriae* (duly noting that the former was an emendation), that "he seems to be not different from" the Asellius of Seneca's letter, and "also perhaps" the "Asillius (or Asellius)" of Augustus.

The only other scholar to seriously consider the question of nomenclature and identity adopted a severely sceptical attitude: Orth (1973) 255-256 n.2. For him the amalgamation of any of these figures is a risky hypothesis because of their varied social circles (on which, see below); and there is no proof even for the generally accepted identification of the Sabinus of the *Controversiae* with the Sabinus Asilius of the *Suasoriae*.

What is the joke in the latter work? The *suasoria* to be treated — that is, the supposed debate over a famous historical event — was one beloved of declaimers: “The Three Hundred Spartans sent against Xerxes deliberate whether they too should retreat following the flight of the contingents of three hundred sent from all over Greece.” Seneca records and comments on no fewer than 35 contributions, solemn, forceful, epigrammatic, arguments pro and con, expressions fine or ridiculous. Asilius’ contribution is a delightful relief. Another declaimer had very elegantly quoted in Greek an alleged recommendation by King Leonidas to the 300, something like “Take breakfast: you will dine in Hades.” Asilius repeated the dramatic words and commented, “I would have accepted for breakfast, but declined for dinner.” His remark is fresh, witty, ironic, but its form is more important than its content. The Leonidean *sententia* that evoked it was an epigram by a contemporary Greek declaimer Dorion, but Dorion spoke “not in this *suasoria* but on this theme, *in hac materia*.” Seneca much admired it as *disertissima*, and misremembered the version of it in Herodotus, Dorion’s source. But when Sabinus Asilius quotes the remark he says what *he* would have done in the situation. He could not possibly have intruded himself into a declamation. Thus the joke aligns itself with those in the *Controversiae*: it has nothing to do with the theme at hand.⁸ Its very irrelevance — Seneca’s simple fascination with the man — is yet further hint that the Sabini in his two works were indeed one man.

Next, the “Asellius Sabinus” who was rewarded by Tiberius for the dialogue *in quo boleti et ficedulae et ostreae et turdi certamen induxerat*. He was surely the same as Seneca’s “Sabinus Asilius”. Seneca tells us that his man served on the staff of the proconsul of Crete and Cyrene, Occius Flamma, along with the infamous and hated, but otherwise unknown, Turdus. When trouble arose he refused to return to Caesar with a tidbit, *mattea*. *Turdi*, thrushes, were *matteae*, delicacies passed around among the guests at a banquet before or after the main courses, and the *turdus* was in Martial’s opinion the prime *mattea* among birds. Hence Sabinus’ contemptuous dismissal of his disreputable colleague, The Thrush.⁹ But Sabinus actually *did* go to Caesar with a *mattea*: precisely with a dialogue presenting a *turdus* in competition with three other

⁸ Feddern (2013) explores the situation thoroughly at p. 269-270. More about the content of the witticism below, p. 176.

⁹ Martial 13.92, cf. Petronius *Satyrica* 65.1.

matteae. In short, Seneca presents us with Sabinus Asilius + Caesar + Turdus, Suetonius with Asellius Sabinus + Tiberius (Caesar) plus *turdus*. It would take a will of adamant to deny that Seneca's irrepressibly witty friend "Sabinus Asilius" and the author of a *jeu d'esprit* attributed by Suetonius to "Asellius Sabinus" were one and the same man.

By the same logic he must also be the "Asellius" in the *Letter* of the younger Seneca, whose anecdote maps neatly onto those related by his father. At issue is the hesitant oratorical style of P. Vinicius, who searched excruciatingly for words (*titubat*). The acerbic Varius Geminus remarked of him "I don't know how you [plural] call that fellow eloquent: he can't string three words together." More succinctly, "when it was asked how Vinicius spoke, Asellius offered a single word: "Long-drawn out, *tractim*".¹⁰ This passage could have been lifted verbatim from the *Controversiae*: Varius' penchant for pugnacious criticism was familiar, and indeed both he and Vinicius are prominent and successful senatorial performers in the *Controversiae*.¹¹ And yet again: we have a *bon mot* from Asellius; it appears in an oratorical context; and there is no sign that it was elicited by a declamation.

Finally there is the outlier, "Asillius" in the letter of Augustus to Agrippina. The excerpt begins thus, literally: "That Talarius and Asillius might bring the boy Gaius on May the 13th, if the gods wish it, I arranged with them yesterday."¹² Agrippina was travelling to join her husband Germanicus in Germany, but her location is unknown, perhaps already en route, much more likely still in or near Rome. Wherever Augustus may have been, in Rome, or near Rome, or in Campania, the likeliest scenario is not that Talarius and Asillius would travel all the way to Germany, but that they would simply deliver ("bring") the child to Agrippina before she sets out. Be that as it may, there is a curious aspect to this small errand. No such name as "Talarius" can be found in the literature or inscriptions, Greek or Latin, of classical antiquity. It should be another joke, not a name but a nickname, one familiar to Augustus and to his granddaughter.

¹⁰ *Epp.* 40.9: *Cum quaereretur, quomodo P. Vinicius diceret, Asellius ait: "Tractim."*

¹¹ *PIR*² V 276, V 662. Jerome calls Varius *sublimis orator*.

¹² Suetonius *Gaius* 8.4: *Puerum Gaium XV. Kal Iun. si dii volent, ut ducerent Talarius et Asillius, heri cum iis constitui*. He adds that he is sending a doctor with the boy, one of his slaves, and that Germanicus may keep him if he wants, and wishes her a safe journey to her husband.

It might recall the *talara*, the winged sandals of Mercury the messenger god, appropriate to conducting a traveller. But his sandals are rare in Latin and never found in the context of escorting, indeed “bringing” the child might elicit the unfortunate connotation of Mercury the psychopomp.

More attractive would be a play on the *ludus talarius*. This was a louche dance performed by men in long tunics which reached down to their ankles, *tali*. They gamboled to the jangle of cymbals and castanets, an effeminate exhibition and morally suspect. Cicero enthusiastically smears Verres with the *talarius*, then the followers of Catiline, and then social scum of all ranks in general.¹³ Indeed Augustus may have sown trouble for the future: the only other known aficionado of the disreputable art is that very Gaius who would be escorted by “Talarus”. As the adult Caligula he once without warning summoned three apprehensive ex-consuls in the middle of the night, only to startle them by leaping out to the sound of flutes and castanets, to dance about in a cloak and a *tunica talarica*.¹⁴ Perhaps Talarus designated a man with a similar passion for dancing in womanly fashion, The Talarian. It is a witty summation of a character, and one not unexpected in the company of Asellius/Asillius, perhaps even coined by him.

In short, “Asellius”, “Asilius”, and (notably, between the two) “Asillius” should be a single person, and further aspects and advantages of the amalgamation will emerge below. Whether the variety of spellings is to be ascribed to scribal vagaries or to orthographic variations, Seneca’s jesting friend should be “Asellius Sabinus”.¹⁵

HIS DATES

He first appears in the spring of 14, as an adult, in the letter of Augustus, which was written a few months before the *princeps* died, *ante paucos*

¹³ Cicero Verr. 2.5.31, 86; Cat. 2.22; Att. 1.16.3 (*maculosi senatores, nudi equites, tribuni non tam aerati quam, ut appellantur, aerarii*). See *RE* Talarus ludus (F. Altheim). I can see no evidence, despite common repetition of an attractive assumption, that the term ever referred to a game of dice (*tali* = ankle bones = dice).

¹⁴ Suetonius *Gaius* 54.2

¹⁵ Three times out of the 5 instances noted here. I can find no examples in classical literature of Asil(l)ius/a other than the Asilius in Seneca’s *Suasoriae* and the Asillius in Suetonius’ *Augustus*. The name is extremely rare in Latin inscriptions and does not occur in Greek. Asel(l)ius is relatively common in both inscriptions and literature, East and West.

quam obiret menses: May 13th is in the near future, and Augustus was to die on August 19th of that year. Otherwise Sabinus' life is essentially identified with the era of Tiberius. The year in which he accompanied Occius Flamma in Crete is unknown — there are large gaps in the fasti of Crete and Cyrene — but it is generally agreed (on no firm evidence) that the “Caesar” in whose time Flamma served as governor should be Tiberius.¹⁶ Declaimers with whom Asellius may have interacted can also be dated generally to the same period: P. Vinicius (consul AD 2, alive in 25); Q. Varius Geminus (praetor, proconsul, and twice legate of the Divine Augustus, hence alive after 14); Vallius Syriacus (executed in AD 30). But one of them yields a precise date, the consul Domitius.

It is rightly assumed that the *nobilissimus vir* must be Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, who served as *consul ordinarius* throughout the year 32.¹⁷ This gives us a valuable fix on the overwhelming cataclysm of the era, the abrupt and horrifying downfall of Sejanus in October of 31 and the bloody reprisals against his followers. When Sabinus himself lay in jail awaiting trial he claimed that he had to beg for bread from fellow prisoners, the “rich Sejanians” whom he described as “parricides” — parricide being the standard term of demonization for enemies of the Father of His Country. That is to say, the tribulations of Asellius Sabinus were *not* connected with the collapse of Sejanus. In the Domitius anecdote we find him comfortably cracking a joke with aristocratic friends months after the prefect's fall, and in a plea for sympathy he would later take pains to distinguish himself from, and to denigrate, the Seianiani. Tacitus tells us explicitly that in 33 Tiberius executed everyone then in prison accused of association with Sejanus.¹⁸ That should assign Sabinus' incarceration with them to (at the least) a period from 32 to 33, on charges unknown. When and how he may have left prison is unknown.

Seneca probably gathered his rhetorical memories in the latter years of Tiberius, after 34, in his old age, and he himself died no later than 40.

¹⁶ Orth (1973) 257 n. 15 confidently observes that Augustus appears in Seneca as *Divus Augustus* or *Augustus Caesar*. In fact he is also simply “Caesar”, demonstrably at C 10.5.21 (Passienus anecdote) and 22 (Timagenes anecdote).

¹⁷ With seven generations of consular ancestors in direct succession, there was no one more “noble” than he in the Roman state under Augustus and Tiberius, nor any other remotely noble Domitius.

¹⁸ Tacitus *Ann.* 6.19.2: *inritatusque suppliciis cunctos qui carcere attinebantur accusati societatis cum Seiano necari iubet*. The year of what he calls *immensa strages* is confirmed by the *Fasti Ostienses*. The last related prosecution seems to have occurred in 35: 6.38.2.

He writes of Sabinus in the past tense (*erat*): whatever the cause, the man was surely dead by the time of Tiberius' own demise in 37 or within a few months of it.

HIS LIFE

Who was Asellius Sabinus, where did he come from, what did he do?

The clearest item of evidence is Seneca's description of him as *venustissimus inter rhetores scurra*. That must mean that he was a rhetor himself for, as far as we can see, Seneca seems to use the word strictly to describe professional teachers of rhetoric. By the days of the late Republic, the profession embraced men from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds, often freedmen and foreigners, but also native Italians and even local gentry. Most memorably, by the end of the Republic or in the very early years of Augustus, a Rubellius Blandus from Tibur was the first Roman knight to work as a rhetor.¹⁹ No member of the senate ever could or did teach professionally, but that leaves an immense range of possible backgrounds for our hero.

Seneca cannot resist recounting, *praeterire non possum*, two of his "urbanities", *urbanas res*, displayed before crowds in Crete and capped by the witticisms about the greatest magistracy and about the tidbit. The two episodes are neatly balanced. In each Sabinus interacts with a mob, one excited, the other angry. Each unfolds in a central public gathering place, a theater and a temple. Each time he silences the mob, each time he makes a jest. Yet, neatly fashioned though they are and stripped of detail, these anecdotes raise more questions than they answer. We are not told where this all happened, although the Cretan capital of Gortyn is likely. Nor do we know who Caesar was, although Tiberius is probable. *Urbanas res* here should describe the whole episode, actions as well as words, not just verbal wit but deportment as well, the oratorical gesture for silence, the assured handling of a crowd. For his own purposes Seneca may make punchlines out of what were passing remarks.

¹⁹ C 2 pr. 5. In fact "primus" is a modern editorial insertion into the text, which may not be necessary — but he certainly was not the last. Blandus clearly came from a wealthy background; his senatorial son married a patrician Sergia; his grandson was the first consul in his family and in 33 he married Julia, the granddaughter of Tiberius himself. Tacitus deplores the grandson's grandfather as a knight (6.27.1) but, curiously, ignores his professional employment.

More puzzling, the jokes are unintelligible. As to the first, reacting to the offer of the magistracy, even with verbal emphasis (*this* magistracy) and gesture (pointing to the hair and beard of a local notable), who would understand it without an explanation, or even with one? And how does appearing unkempt in court at Rome as a *reus* — for that is the point of his joke — transfer into performing a *magistratus*? Is there some pun we cannot perceive? Seneca adds, not surprisingly, *Graeci non intellexerunt*, and we can sympathize.

As to the second jest, in what language did Sabinus address an angry Greek mob? Surely not in Latin.²⁰ Surely in Greek, but it makes no sense in Greek: the offensive man's name was Turdus, on which the Latin pun is based, not Strouthos, or whatever the Greek equivalent might be. Perhaps the joke was an aside in Latin, but why then did Sabinus impose silence to make it (or did he drop it into an already existing silence)? And when we are told that the Turdus remark was brought up against him at trial, does Seneca mean a trial involving the disturbance on Crete, or another? What were the charges? How could this joke possibly be held against him? Again, Seneca's sons knew the outcome, but we are in the dark.

The gloom deepens. What was the *maximus magistratus* pressed upon him by the enthusiastic Greeks in the theater? W. Orth thought that this should be the Cretarchy, that is, the office that would be in charge (in later times at least) of both the imperial cult in the province and the provincial assembly. But this raises yet more questions. Who were "the Greeks" here? Cretans in general (not to mention Cyreneans), or local citizens (perhaps Gortynians)? If the latter, they may have wanted him to hold municipal office (a not uncommon honor for visiting dignitaries). Regardless, what did they understand by him holding the "greatest office" twice in Rome? Not the Cretarchy, of course. Surely not the consulship or the prefecture of the city of Rome, both very senior senatorial offices, and Sabinus was not a senator, let alone a senior senator. Offices in Caesar's gift, so they think (*bene precati Caesari petebant*), but if this is news to the Greeks they were apparently quite ignorant of the career of a man to whom they were offering their highest magistracy. And what honor could they possibly think they were bestowing upon him for the third time? We do not know.

²⁰ How many in the mob would know that *turdus* was a delicacy served at Roman banquets, indeed how many would understand Latin at all? We are perilously close to Blessed are the Cheesemakers.

The one gleam of light is the aura projected by Sabinus, the air of aristocratic assurance. The entourage of a proconsul in a minor senatorial province is a deceptively modest employment.²¹ Sabinus was a man who could silence a mob with a gesture, not once but twice. He could gossip with a consul's mother and chaff the noble consul himself. He could criticize the style of the sharp-tongued P. Vinicius, consul ordinarius, seasoned general, tremendous admirer of Ovid. Seneca observed of this Vinicius not that he was hesitant but that that he was very precise, *exactissimus*, that is, he neither said anything that was absurd (*res ineptas*) nor did he tolerate it in others. Sabinus summed up this formidable figure's manner of speaking, in a single *bon mot*, as *tractim*, long-drawn out: the *mot juste*, witty but not wounding, neither subservient nor truculent.²² Sabinus could also affect nonchalance about his own concerns: he admitted receiving a sum of money from the other party in a lawsuit, but had no idea whether he still had it, then could joke in court about his *neglegentia*.²³ And he could mock his own profession, as when he suggested that an orator, if ruined by a lawsuit, would have to fall back on teaching rhetoric.

Another echo of the manner can be heard in his speech before the senate, pleading for his daily bread (9.4.20): *Nolite, inquam, superbe audire hominem calamitosum: saepe qui misereri potuit misericordiam rogat*,

²¹ The proconsul Occius Flamma is otherwise unknown, but the scanty evidence points to impressive connections. The family was senatorial since the mid-second-century at least (Valerius Maximus 3.2.21); a contemporary Occia was a Vestal Virgin from 39 or 38 BC to AD 19 (T 2.86.1 — a guardian, be it noted, of the *flammas Vestae*!); and a singular concentration of impressively aristocratic Occii in central Greece under the Julio-Claudians strongly hints at an unknown Occius as governor of Achaia in the late Republic or early principate (*IG* II² 3364, 3280; *IvO* 453; *SEG* 29.528, 53.550).

²² P. Vinicius: *C* 1.4.11 (steals other men's words); 7.5.11-12 (*exactissimus*; "derides" as ridiculous one *sententia*, dismissing it as *diligens stultitia*; "derides" another's *sententia*); 10.4.25 (*summus amator Ovidii*). The man was most exacting, and hence intolerant of anything that was, literally, "in-apt". He and Varius Geminus make a ferocious pair.

²³ The atmosphere seems to be one of aristocratic indifference to income and expenditure, but the witticism at 9.4.18 (like its companions) is complicated, strained, and to us extraordinarily obscure. The jester plays on two related legal terms. If one was paid for mounting a fraudulent or malicious prosecution, *calumnia*, one could be charged with *pecuniam accipere* (*Digest* 3.6.1-3, 39.6.12, 48.2.4). A hostile advocate here inquires whether the witness Sabinus had received money for prosecution, and then whether he had therefore been charged with calumny (this must be the meaning of *calumniam habere*, but it is awkward and I can find no parallel). Sabinus plays on *accipere* and *habere*. He says that he had "accepted" money but did not know whether he "had" it; he knew that he had "accepted" (a charge of) calumny, but did not know whether he "had" it. I have no idea how this was relevant to the case at hand, nor what *pars adversa* signifies.

“Do not, I say, listen haughtily to a man of many sorrows: often he who could have pitied begs for pity.” *Qui misereri potuit* might hint at some former position or attitude of authority. Be that as it may, the humor that Seneca so deplored was on display yet again, tangentially. Otto Ribbeck thought that the second clause was a line quoted from a now lost *fabula palliata*.²⁴ But to render it metrically sound he had to emend the words spoken by the self-styled *homo calamitosus* substantially, from *Saepe qui misereri potuit misericordiam rogat* to *Saepe qui misereri potuit, rogitat misericordiam*. In fact the line is not a quotation from a *palliata* but a clever nod to a lower form of comedy. Sabinus has a mime in mind, but one written by a master of the art, Publilius Syrus: *Homo qui in homine calamitoso est misericors meminit sui*.²⁵ If we had any context for it — what character spoke it, and in what play — we might be able to gauge the wit and appropriateness, but we do not, and another witticism eludes us.

Sabinus knew the *princeps* Augustus personally and was entrusted by him with a private mission. He was rewarded by Augustus’ stepson and adopted son Tiberius in princely fashion for what must have been a brief and witty composition. And he knew and joked with the mother of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus in AD 32, the year of his consulship. This grande dame was none other than Augustus’ niece, known as Antonia Maior, born in 39 BC, the elder daughter of Octavia and Mark Antony. Overshadowed by her younger sister, Antonia Minor (a powerful character, sister-in-law and close confidante of Tiberius), the only hint of her personality survives in Seneca’s brief anecdote.²⁶ Widowed in AD 25, she would live to see her son married in 28 to Tiberius’ granddaughter, and she was in her early seventies when Ahenobarbus served as consul.

Sabinus’ easy familiarity with the *domus Caesarum* is striking. Augustus’ relaxed note to his granddaughter about escorting the toddler Gaius suggests friendship rather than service, and Sabinus’ relationship with Antonia is extraordinary. His chat with an elderly woman has nothing to do with public schoolroom, lecture hall, or court of law. He has been visiting and gossiping with her, and he is confident enough teasingly to pass on Antonia’s private grumbling about her son’s laziness to the son himself, the consul of Rome. His witticism is in Greek, playing upon a proverb

²⁴ Whence *Frag.Com.Inc.* 76, duly recorded by editors of Seneca.

²⁵ 243.

²⁶ Overlooked at *RE* Antonius 113 and *PIR*² A 884.

best known from a passage in Plato's *Laws*. The *Suda* explains it succinctly: "To know neither swimming nor letters refers to the entirely ignorant, for among the Athenians swimming and letters were taught from early childhood."²⁷ A favorite of ancient paroemiographers and philosophical commentators, this proverbial Greek definition of ignorance was certainly familiar to educated Romans: Licinius Mucianus, three times consul, would use it in his stinging attacks on self-proclaimed Stoic philosophers; while "Augustus himself taught his grandsons both letters and swimming, and many other fundamentals".²⁸ In short, the fortuitous combination of baths and declamation in AD 32 sparks a clever *bon mot* from Asellius Sabinus recalling a Greek proverb. It is charming and complimentary: Antonia's son the consul is identified as neither ignorant nor lazy. Indeed it speaks volumes about the common culture of the Roman elite.

There is more. Both of his "urbanities" in Crete invoke Caesar. When he jokes that he has performed the magistracy twice at Rome, the Greeks take him literally and automatically praise Caesar: whether they understand him or not, they know of or assume his connection with, and patronage by, the *princeps* himself. When Sabinus jokes contemptuously that he will not go with a tidbit to Caesar, what does he mean? If this were a question of prosecuting some or all of a proconsul's *comites*, proceedings must have begun in the senate. Why was he going to Caesar? We do not know, but the two anecdotes suggest yet again an exceptional relationship, both past and future, with the current *princeps*.

A family of Asellii flourished in the Roman senate in the last days of the Roman Republic, duly certified by a legendary ancestor, M. Asellius, supposed tribune of the plebs in 422. The evidence is exceptionally elusive, but the generally accepted prosopographical conclusions are as sound as such things can be.²⁹ Briefly, a M. Asellius M.f. Maec(ia) witnessed a *senatus consultum* in April 44, soon after the death of Julius Caesar; and a praetor Asellius is credited with introducing baby storks into Roman

²⁷ *Suda* mu 989: Μῆτε νεῖν μήτε γράμματα ἐπίστασθαι: ἐπὶ τῶν παντάπασιν ἀμαθῶν: παρὰ γὰρ Ἀθηναίοις εὐθὺς ἐκ παιδὸς κολυμβᾶν καὶ γράμματα ἐδιδάσκετο. Cf. Plato *Laws* 689d. The proverb conventionally has νεῖν for swimming, but note that the *Suda* uses κολυμβᾶν in its definition, the more elegant word employed by Sabinus.

²⁸ Dio 66.13.1a; Suetonius *Augustus* 64.3: *Nepotes et litteras et natare aliaque rudimenta per se plerumque docuit*. It is immaterial whether the phrasing is Augustus' or Suetonius'.

²⁹ Considered in detail in the Appendix below, p. 191.

cuisine. This gourmand (on whom more later, p. 000) is most likely one of the following: L. Asellius, praetor before c. 92 BC; L. Asellius, praetor 33; or Asellius praetor suffect 33. If so, he is probably one of the last two, who were father and son, and much closer in date to the rise of luxury dining at Rome. And if so, that produces another connection with the future Augustus, who personally appointed the son to replace the father as praetor when the father fell ill in 33.

Professional rhetor though he may have been, Asellius Sabinus came from a most aristocratic background: his family was senatorial and he was on intimate terms with the *domus Caesarum* of Augustus and Tiberius.

HIS DIET

He was not only a wit, he was an epicure in an age of gastronomy.

“He [Tiberius] presented a gift of 200,000 sesterces to Asellius Sabinus for a dialogue in which he had represented the contest of a mushroom and a figpecker and an oyster and a thrush.”³⁰ The *Contest of the Tidbits* is unique. We can assume that each of the competing *matteae* presented its case for being the greatest delicacy at a banquet. And we should assume that their table talk was both short and witty. Surely short: most ancient dialogues were not long works, and a light and humorous debate among four Delicatessen would lose steam if prolonged.³¹ Certainly witty because Asellius Sabinus was the wit of the age. Tiberius Caesar — highly literate, but notoriously grim and parsimonious, *homo tristissimus, pecuniae parcus ac tenax* — gave an enormous sum of money to the author of what looks to have been a *jeu d’esprit*. 200,000 sesterces was the annual salary of the highest paid procurator in the imperial service, in an age when possession of property worth 400,000 sesterces was the *census* required to qualify as a member of the equestrian elite of the Roman world.³² What was Tiberius rewarding?

It is difficult to enter the thought-world of the ancient oyster: our sources have little interest in its beliefs or emotions. Very difficult, but not impossible. Thus from the third century BC we have the thoughts of

³⁰ S 42.2: *Asellio Sabino sestertia ducenta donavit pro dialogo, in quo boleti et fideculae et ostreae et turdi certamen induxerat.*

³¹ On the length, see further below, p. 184.

³² The literature on both equestrian salaries and census is enormous. The ducenarian procurator is assured by Suetonius *Claudius* 24.1.

a proud native of Abydus on the Hellespont, a city famous for its resident molluscs. Not unexpectedly, much has been lost in translation:

Near the earth tomb of Ethiopian Memnon, [it was not the Nile which reared me, it was Ocean which] nursed me on the rocks of adamant (the virgin, Helle?), as I revelled in the sweet rays of Agrotera (Artemis, the moon). I am a feast without fire (uncooked) for mortal men, when Doso's bridegroom (Aphrodite's lover, Ares, the knife) cleaves me with his hide-piercing weapon.³³

The oyster's thoughts have been set down in a six-line elegy by "a poet of the first-rank", as its first editor correctly estimated. Preserved on a fragmentary papyrus, it is a fragment of true Alexandrian learning, replete with hapax legomena, exotic erudition, and Homeric flourishes. Its tone is purposely ambiguous and obscure, its high value marked by the attachment to it in the second century of an astonishingly learned commentary of at least fifty lines.

Slightly later, the oysters of Italian Baiae also rose to fame, bringing us closer both to home and to the contest of the tidbits. We have a brief but succulent self-description by a Roman oyster, a molluscan Alcibiades swaggering into a banquet: "A shellfish, I have just arrived, drunk with Baian Lucrine. Luxurious, I now thirst for noble garum." A figpecker is also present, wistfully reflecting on its own puzzling name and nature: "Though the fig nourish me, yet since I feed on sweet grapes, why did not the grape rather give me my name?" Someone, perhaps a mushroom itself, remarks on the mushroom's delicate constitution and, by implication, its high value as a dinner gift: "It is easy to send silver and gold and a cloak and a gown, but sending mushrooms is difficult." And the poet intervenes with nasty wit to praise the thrush, likewise in comparison with the best: "Perhaps you may like a garland woven of roses or rich nard, but I like one made of thrushes."³⁴

³³ Abydus: Arcestratus *ap.* Athenaeus 92D; Ennius *ap.* Apuleius *Apologia* 39.2.

The text in question, *P. Louvre inv.* 7733v, consisting of both the poem, titled "Oyster", and the extensive ancient commentary on it, was first edited by F. Lasserre: Lasserre (1975). A conservative edition of the six lines of verse was offered by P. Parsons two years later: Parsons (1977). The translation here is that of Parsons. Brackets indicate reconstruction of the text based on very difficult readings; parentheses gloss the learned obscurities. I am deeply grateful to the anonymous reader for drawing my attention to this text.

³⁴ Martial 13.82 (Loeb translation, Shackleton Bailey, modified): *Ebria Baiano veni modo concha Lucrino: / nobile nunc sitio luxuriosa garum.* 13.49: *Cum me ficus alat, cum pascor dulcibus uvis, / cur potius nomen non dedit uva mihi?* 13.48: *Argentum et*

Animated *matteae* appealed to Roman fancies. In his *Captives* Plautus has the old man Hegio as “*imperator*” organize a campaign in a “*provincia*” which is in fact the stomach of the parasite Ergasilus: his “*exercitus*” will be communities of food preparers and foodstuffs, including “*milites*” who are Turdetani and Fidiculenses — peoples clearly meant to evoke the avian tidbits, *turdi* and *fideculae*. The otherwise sober Pliny the Elder imagines a potential lawsuit (*lis*) between the famous oysters from the Lucrine Lake and their recently popular rivals from distant Brundisium, in *extremam Italiam*. Conflict is averted by a happy compromise: en route to Rome, the hungry Brundisians would be fed in the Lake after their long journey. At a banquet in Lucilius’ 30th book of Satires, figpeckers and thrushes fly about prepared and cooked. Along the same lines, when a Roman knight renowned for his voluptuous tastes was served a meager thrush at a banquet, he asked his host, Augustus himself, if he might let it loose. When the *princeps* answered “Why not?”, the man threw it out the window. Eventually Claudius’ notorious wife Agrippina would have a *turdus* that imitated the conversations of men, *quod numquam ante*.³⁵

With these delicacies sharing the table, a rich culinary aroma arises from the scraps of evidence about Sabinus. The author of a dialogue among Delicatessen, he expressed his distaste, not coincidentally, at travelling to Rome with a tidbit, a *Turdus*. He also suavely digested Leonidas’ laconic command to the 300 Spartans about their meals: he would have accepted the breakfast invitation but declined for dinner. A near kinsman introduced Rome to the latest novelty in dining, young storks. Yet ironically Sabinus had to beg before the senate for basic sustenance, his daily food allowance in prison. He complained of hunger, pleaded for bread to keep himself alive. Never able to resist a joke, he asked facetiously to be transferred from his current prison to another nearby, the Quarries, *Lautumiae*. He wryly advised his audience not to be deceived by the name,

aurum facile est laenamque togamque / mittere: boletos mittere difficile est. 13.51: *Texta rosis fortasse tibi vel divite nardo, / at mihi de turdis facta corona placet* — the tiny thrushes would be strung together in a *decuria*. Of the 124 gifts in Martial Book 13, about fifteen seem to speak in the first person.

³⁵ Plautus *Captivi* 152-156, at 163-164. Pliny NH 9.168: *ac ne lis esset inter duos saporis, nuper excogitatum famem longae advectionis a Brundisio conpascere in Lucrino*. Lucilius 1109-10 W = 978-979 M: *et circumvolitant ficedulae ... turdi curati cocti*. Macrobius 2.4.42: *Curtius eques Romanus deliciis diffluens, cum macrum turdum sumpsisset in convivio Caesaris, interrogavit an mittere liceret. Responderat princeps, “quidni liceat?” Ille per fenestram statim misit*. Pliny NH 10.120: talking thrush.

for the place itself was not at all *lauta*, sumptuous, luxurious. The pun on *Lautumiae* and *lautitia*, elegance, luxury, is painful, but the senators were surely meant to think precisely of the prime instance of *lautitia*: that is, of luxury dining, *lautitia cenarum*, *lautitia epularum*, *lautitia mensae* — in fact, Festus' definition of the noun *lautitia* is precisely "*epularum magnificentia*".³⁶ Sabinus' audience must have thought of his reputation as a gourmand. Fine dining was the very last thing to be expected at the Quarries: in 108 BC one man had eaten another there.³⁷

It was the Greek Dorion who invented the dramatic Leonidean command about dining in Hades. He had, as we learn later, spoken on the *suasoria* about the debate of the 300, but Seneca adds that he offered his Hades witticism not in that declamation but "on this subject". Unfortunately in his haste our author does not tell us what the actual context was: as with Sabinus' reaction to it, it may not have been offered in a declamation at all. But Seneca's impulse to throw in the laconic *sententia* is not surprising, for he had strong feelings about this Dorion, a mixture of admiration for the man's talent and dismay at his mad tendency to go over the top. In one *controversia* a father disinherits his son for disobeying his order not to march off to battle yet again after three heroic campaigns. Seneca quotes some lines from Dorion's version of the father's speech, prefacing them with mixed appraisal: he "said something rather too exalted to be tolerated by concise forensic oratory, but which excellently portrayed, *egregie exprimeret*, the stupefaction of the father." Also on the plus side, the man's *sententia* about dining in Hades was *disertissima*. But his offering on another *controversia* was truly alarming. This posited an artist who tortures a war captive in order to paint a convincing "Prometheus". Dorion spoke "insanely", *furiose*, to justify the torture of models: how could one depict the parricidal Oedipus or Atreus without seeing their myths alive? And his contribution to the *suasoria* "Alexander debates whether to sail the ocean" elicits a long and passionate fulmination from Seneca: people thought Dorion's bombastic paraphrase of a passage in the *Odyssey* "the worst thing ever said since eloquent men,

³⁶ Paul Fest. 104L. *Cenarum*: Fenestella ap. Pliny NH 35.162; Seneca Epp. 114.9; cf. Martial 11.31.20. *Epularum*: Seneca Epp. 74.14; Pliny NH 9.119. *Mensae*: Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 5.8.1. *Convivia* at Seneca *De brevitate vitae* 12.5; cf. Columella 12.46.1, *urbanas mensas et lauta convivia*. Also Ateius Capito ap. Pliny NH 18.108: bread baked for *lautiores*. Trimalchio of course *passim*.

³⁷ Obsequens 40: *In laotomiis homo ab homine adesus*. From Livy, so surely known to Sabinus' auditors.

deserti, began to go crazy, *insanire*.” As with Leonidas dining in Hades, Dorion showed a gift for melodrama, in Seneca’s view lapsing not once but twice into insanity.³⁸

Dorion was a contemporary of Seneca: hence he flourished in the latter half of the first century BC. We have from the same period many fragments, preserved by Athenaeus, of a book *On Fishes*, by an author named Dorion. Close attention to those fragments reveals that it was a diligent compilation which ranged over the ichthyological universe, offering not just the minutiae of the various names and spellings of individual fish, but also information about the differences among the species and about where they lived, and instructions for cooking and roasting them.³⁹ Occam’s razor suggests that in an age of polymaths Dorion the writer on fish is probably Dorion the declaimer — how many contemporary Dorions can there have been? — and he leads us into a lost world.

Asellius Sabinus flourished in the Golden Age of Roman cuisine. Tacitus would be precise and damning about the era of *luxus mensae*, “which, from the end of the Actian War to the hostilities which brought Servius Galba to the acquisition of power, was practiced for a hundred years with surging expenditure.”⁴⁰ The thunderous chorus of disapproval from the moralists — Tacitus, Pliny, Seneca, Columella — is too familiar to need rehearsal: Ludwig Friedländer demonstrated long ago that it must be taken with an enormous grain of salt. They were repelled by the perceived excesses of contemporary gastronomy: the luxurious and self-indulgent gluttony, the attendant debauchery, the foolish ostentation, the frivolous search for novelty, the corruption by foreigners. But to accept their disapproval as fact is to miss a whole universe. The history of Roman cuisine remains to be written, despite intense scholarly interest in the last few decades in “foodways”, that is, in “customs of food production, preservation, preparation, presentation, gathering, marketing, uses of food products

³⁸ The debate of the 300: *S* 2.22. Disinherited son: *C* 1.8.16. Hades: *S* 2.11. Prometheus: *C* 10.5.23. Alexander: *S* 1.12.

³⁹ Fundamental here is M. Wellmann’s extraordinary feat of *Quellenforschung*, Wellmann (1888). He summarizes the character of the work at p. 190. As to its author’s date, we must be satisfied with the first century before Christ and perhaps more precisely its second half: p. 192-193. The ichthyological Dorion does not appear in *PW*.

⁴⁰ *Annals* 3.55.1 (trans. A.J. Woodman). The historian proceeds to explain with great satisfaction that luxurious dining abated after AD 68 because rich families had ruined themselves; new men from municipalities, colonies, and even the provinces brought their frugality into the upper classes; and the emperor Vespasian led a conspicuously simple, old-fashioned life (pointedly different from that of his extravagant predecessors).

other than for eating, and food folklore.”⁴¹ Several aspects of this culture are relevant to Asellius Sabinus, most significantly the intersection within the well-appointed private triclinium at Rome of wit, erudition, wealth, and power.

Ancient writing on the purchase, preparation, and serving of food survives only in fragments and testimonia, but there was a lot of it. The number and variety of known works is extraordinary, all lost now, save the bare, unrepresentative, late antique compilation of recipes ascribed to “Apicius”. But practical instructions for use in the kitchen were of little concern to the sophisticated diner: those were for his cooks. He himself was interested in enlightenment, entertainment, and the rational pursuit of pleasure. For guidance he turned to the extensive Greek literature devoted to gastronomy since the fourth century.⁴² Its peak came early, in the mid-to-late fourth century BC with two key works.

The acknowledged master of the genre was Archestratus of Gela, who has been called the First Gourmet. No fewer than five different titles have been transmitted for his single masterpiece, the most commonly repeated and most likely being a word coined by him, *Hedupatheia*, which has been translated as *The Life of Luxury*, or *The Experience of Pleasure*, or *La Dolce Vita*. It certainly described different foods and various aspects of cooking, although the surviving fragments, all from Athenaeus, are mainly concerned with fish: where and when to find them, how to procure them, how to prepare them. In their pursuit Archestratus travelled far and wide around the Greek world of the central and eastern Mediterranean. His concerns were attacked by Hellenistic philosophers and they were largely dismissed by generations of modern classical philologists. But attitudes have changed, and in the age of *nouvelle cuisine*, slow food, and farm-to-table scholars have responded with enthusiasm to a work that vigorously prescribes, indeed demands, the finest quality, the proper season, local sourcing, and simple preparation. Moreover the form of Archestratus’ work honored its content, for “It was almost certainly not a hands-on cookery book but a volume to be enjoyed at a rich man’s banquet and symposium.”⁴³ In fact the *Hedupatheia* was a long, ingenious, and confidently learned *poem*, and Archestratus was the “Hesiod

⁴¹ The definition is that quoted by J. Darnton at http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/foodways_when_food_meets_culture_and_history, accessed 1/7/2016.

⁴² Susemihl (1891) 876-883 discusses some 30 authors writing in Greek from the fourth century onwards; cf. Degani (1991) 52-53.

⁴³ An excellent introduction at Wilkins & Hill (2011) 11-32. The quotation is from p. 32.

or Theognis of epicures”, as Athenaeus would call him. It was replete with witty calques and echoes of Homer, but also with echoes of the tragedians, the comic poets, and others, and it would be savored by sophisticated diners as part of an evening’s entertainment. The learning, the wit, and the confidently opinionated tone all rest on a foundation of wealth and leisure: “If you go to the rich land of Ambracia and happen to see the boarfish, buy it and don’t leave it behind, even if it costs its weight in gold.”⁴⁴ In the 62 surviving fragments Archestratus names no fewer than 60 locales, dotted from the West of Sicily to the North of the Black Sea, and he certainly visited most if not all of them. Indeed his epic (as Athenaeus was to call it) opens with a hexameter memory of the opening line of the Histories of Herodotus. Travel was essential to the true gastronome.

The gourmand’s other key text, the *Attic Banquet* of Matro of Pitane, comes from slightly later in the fourth century, and survives perhaps almost entire in 122 hexameters.⁴⁵ Where Archestratus’ poem was an elegant parody of Homer, Matro’s rough, rumbustious piece went beyond parody into pastiche: it is almost a Homeric cento. E. Degani neatly situated the two works in the landscape of gastronomic poetry: “We might say that while Archestratus intends to reach σπουδαῖον by means of γέλοιον, on the contrary Matro considers the Homeric form (σπουδαῖον) nothing but a way to reach the ultimate aim of his work: γέλοιον.”⁴⁶ Its Homeric format, evident in every line, inevitably guarantees that the dinner party will be presented as a battle with the food: the host is Agamemnon, the cook with his troops of frying pans and saucepans is Achilles, the parasite is Odysseus (and a seagull, and a ravening lion), another guest is Diomedes. The enemy, the various dishes, must then take on the characters of men and women, whether human or divine. Hence sea urchin, anchovy, mullet (horse-breaking), cuttlefish, conger eel, eel (white-armed), squid, tuna, razor shell and shrimp (singers of Zeus), lobster and crayfish (armored, of course), swordfish (mighty in battle), grapes, cake: Homeric personifications, they march in to be attacked and consumed. The parody of gastronomic epic demands that the food be humanized.

⁴⁴ Frag 15, cf. 34, where the reader is urged to buy the *orkus* of Samos without bargaining; and 31, where the *kitharos* is pleased by big spenders. Frag. 21: if the Rhodians refuse to sell you a dogfish, steal it.

⁴⁵ So the general opinion. What can be gleaned about its length is judiciously discussed at Olson & Sens (1999) 3-5.

⁴⁶ Degani (1990) 53. Degani (1994) is a good introduction to the work, with a lively exposition of its contents at p. 415-419.

The influence of the masters, Arcestratus and Matro, is best traced not in the Greek tradition, much of which is lost to us, but in the Latin, specifically in satire. In his *Apology* (39.2) Apuleius recalls from memory 11 lines from the *Hedyphagetica*, *Luxury Eating*, by Ennius, a quasi-translation of Arcestratus, in which the poet alludes to 11 places for the best examples of different seafoods. After which, so Apuleius informs us, he proceeded to describe the native peoples involved and the proper way to cook each dish. Lucilius devoted a poem (5. 3) to a *rustica cena* of humble vegetables in which traces of Matro's mock-heroic style may be discovered.⁴⁷ One of Varro's Menippean Satires, *On Edibles*, pilloried gluttons, *helluones*, in charming senarii, describing delicacies sought out by them on land and on sea and naming some 13 places, mainly in the Greek world — Gellius, commenting on the passage, speaks of the wandering gullet, *peragrans gula*. In the second poem of his second book of Satires, Horace attacks the contemporary passion for exotic dishes: peacock (which sells for gold), bass (how can you really tell where it comes from, the Tiber or the sea?), the hefty three-pound mullet, boar, turbot, sturgeon, young storks. Simple fare is much better. Then, in Satire 2.4, an acquaintance overwhelms him with a torrent of newly acquired wisdom, which turns out to consist not of philosophical but of culinary precepts. The long farrago of disconnected arcestratan certainties includes a veritable culinary atlas of where to find the best of everything (some 20 place-names are invoked)⁴⁸. And in Satire 2.8 an anxiously uncertain would-be gourmet presides over a disastrous dinner party, especially memorable for his exquisitely pretentious description of a dish of moray eel (lines 42-53), and for an avian course that would have been delightful, "if our host had not expatiated on their origins and natures." The themes are familiar, and with Horace we have indeed arrived at the Golden Age of luxury dining: *difficile est satiram non scribere*.

Despite the outrage and ridicule vented by satirists and philosophers on mindless self-indulgence, serious men pursued the pleasures of dining. In a path-breaking paper, 'Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful', John D'Arms sketched the deep social

⁴⁷ Ennius: Courtney *FPL* 22-25, 501. As to Lucilius, the arguments of Shero (1929) are suggestive if not conclusive. He remarks on the mythological name Tiresias; it can be added that Nereus also appears, another multiple personality. More pointedly, the food is humanized: *alma Ceres; flebile cepe lacrimosaeque ordine tallae; fragmenta interficis panis*.

⁴⁸ Statius piles on with his own parody of the gastronome's geographical obsession with the native habitats of the best edibles: *Silvae* 4.6.1-11.

significance of private feasts for the rich and powerful. Banquets were indeed instruments of power, vehicles for aristocratic self-representation and interaction with others, to be admired and imitated. Settings, apparatus, entertainment, exotic foods: all could be dramatically elaborate, costly, competitive, over-the-top assaults on all of the senses, and several literary accounts are amply confirmed by material remains.⁴⁹ The sumptuous private theatrical banquets of Metellus Pius in the 70s and of the young Octavian in the 30s — Octavian's notorious Dinner of the Twelve Gods, complete with *choragus* — set a benchmark for the age of luxury dining.

Less flamboyant but deeply impressive and more to the point here, is the arrestingly gastronomic flavor in Cicero's correspondence with his rich Epicurean friend in Naples, Papirius Paetus — *amandus, dulcis, iucundus* — in 46 BC. At his most charming, Cicero ranges over family history, obscenity, health, the life of the good citizen in trying times, and, repeatedly, fine dining, this being his mock refuge from the trying times. Paetus' half of the banter is missing, but it clearly had the same tone, that is, letter after letter of Cicero fizzles with culinary jokes and puns, all conveying stock themes. Exotic dishes are consumed, including peacock. *Lautitia* is extolled, familiar to Paetus, new to Cicero. Cicero is now both glutton, *homo edax*, and a late but enthusiastic learner, *opsimathes*. He plays the *scurra*. Dinner is a battle: as Paetus' *contubernalis* he attacks his food. Declamation and dining are closely aligned: "I have Hirtius and Dollabella as my pupils in speaking, my masters in dining. As you may have heard, they declaim at my house, I dine at theirs." Both activities are seasoned with salt, wit. Paetus is a paragon of the good old Roman *sales*, saltier than the Attic variety, and explicitly *urbani*, now sadly lost as the *urbs* has been overrun by *peregrinitas*. Cicero particularly delights in the laughter and jokes at a recent banquet, and years later he deprecates Paetus' decision not to dine out: he will miss both *delectatio* and *voluptas*. Then a serious credo: joking aside, it is important for a happy life to live with good, pleasant, friendly men, to share with them community, nourishment, and mental relaxation, the latter to be attained above all in friendly conversation, which is at its most pleasurable at dinner-parties.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ D'Arms (1999) with much evidence. Serious men: there seems to be no trace of female involvement in gastronomy at Rome.

⁵⁰ Cicero *Fam.* 9.15-26. Hirtius and Dolabella: 9.16.7. Paetus' *urbanitas*: 9.15.2. The happy life: 9.24.2.

9.20.2 might offer a brilliant gastronomic pun about Cicero's supposed new passion: *Cum homine et edaci tibi res est et qui iam aliquid intellegat; ὁψιμαθεῖς autem homines*

Cicero happily describes a recent dinner to Paetus, commenting in a general way that “I am delighted by a dinner party: there I say whatever comes to mind, and I transform a groan into shouts of laughter.” On this occasion his host was Volumnius Eutrapelus, a knight close to the inmost circles of power and influence in Caesar’s Rome, the friend not only of Cicero but of Atticus (who was also present at the dinner), of Dolabella, of Cassius and probably Brutus, and above all of Mark Antony — he would serve as Antony’s *praefectus fabrum* in 43, his freedwoman the mime Cytheris was Antony’s mistress (and likewise present at the banquet). His name was P. Volumnius; ‘Eutrapelus’ was a nickname, The Witty. Εὐτράπελία was the Greek equivalent of *urbanitas*, with exactly the same connotation of wit as the expression of superiority, one-upmanship, aggression: Aristotle curtly defined *eutrapelia* as “cultured insolence”. Two letters from Cicero to Eutrapelus survive, couched in the same jokey tone as the correspondence with Paetus, and likewise clearly responding to the friend’s witticisms. In one, Cicero pretends that he did not at first know which “Volumnius” had written a letter to him, but its “eutrapelous” quality gave the man away. While Cicero is in the East, Volumnius acts as the “procurator” of his “salt mines”, *possessio salinarum mearum*, and must protect Cicero against every witticism in Rome being foisted on him. In reality Volumnius is the only one against whom he really needs to worry about defending his *urbanitatis possessionem*.⁵¹

Fine dining, wit, and power: a high level of culture should follow. An anonymous late antique grammarian happens to preserve a hendecasyllable attributed to a Volumnius: *stridentis dabitur patella cymae*, “a platter of sizzling young cabbage will be given”. Franz Buecheler dated the line to the age of Catullus and Vergil, and suggested that Volumnius Eutrapelus was its author.⁵² This must be right, for the concern with

scis quam insolentes sint. He is an “opsimath”, a late learner. But as *homo edax* surely he is also an “opsomath”, a lover of delicacies. The word is unattested in Greek, but cf. “opsomania”.

⁵¹ Eutrapelus’ party: *Fam.* 9.26 (restrained speech and groaning are reactions to Caesar’s tyranny). Syme (1961) offers two excellent pages (26–27) on Eutrapelus’ career and its context. Aristotle *Rhet.* 1389b. Plutarch observes that Cicero’s *eutrapelia* gave him a reputation for maliciousness: *Cicero* 5.6. *Fam.* 7.32 (50 BC): Volumnius is *mi Volumni*; his written words seem *facetiae elegantesque*; *iucundus est mihi sermo litterarum tuarum*. 7.33 (46 BC): *mi suavissime Volumni*; *omni mihi erunt, si tu veneris, hilariora*; etc.

⁵² Courtney *FPL* 234, Hollis *FRP* 164. The poet: *RE* Volumnius 1 (H. Gundel: identity with Eutrapelus “durchaus möglich”. It is generally accepted with or without question by other scholars). Eutrapelus: *RE* Volumnius 11 + 7 (Gundel: an identification universally and rightly accepted). Cytheris: Volumnius 17.

cooking strains belief in coincidence. In fact the line is peculiar. *Stridere*, to hiss, to whistle, to rattle, and so on, is to make a terrifying noise, one overwhelmingly associated with weapons wounding and killing in battle, with monsters, and with horror. It is a much-repeated favorite of Roman epic — imparting violence some 21 times in the *Aeneid* alone. Here it is applied, uniquely, to a vegetable sizzling on a platter. This sounds like the echo of another epic parody.

The Volumnian universe of dining, culture, and power continues of course into the age of one-man rule, the age of Augustus and Sabinus. Horace's patron Maecenas himself, powerful, literate and the very byword for luxury, wrote a *Symposium*. More importantly: "Maecenas set the fashion of eating donkey foals (*pullos*) at banquets, and they were much preferred to wild asses at that period; but after his time the ass lost favor as a delicacy."⁵³ This aligns remarkably with the contemporary fad for eating young storks (likewise *pullos*), similarly short-lived and set by the praetor who was surely a close relative of Asellius Sabinus.⁵⁴ Elite interest in gastronomy was at its peak. After listing eminent foreign authors of cookbooks, Columella adds this about "writers of our own race who, when we were free from wars [thanks, that is, to Augustus], did not disdain to contribute to human nourishment: men like M. Ambivius and Maenas Licinius, and then C. Matius, whose purpose it was by their instructions to organize the work of the baker and the cook, not to mention the butler." These are not unimportant men. Maenas Licinius, otherwise unknown, has been identified as a Licinius Mena and the son of a well-off freedman musician of the late Republic. Marcus Ambivius was certainly a knight and as procurator governed the turbulent province of Judaea for Augustus. And Gaius Matius was also a knight, son of Julius Caesar's close friend, himself a friend and counselor of Augustus. Dedicatee of a book on rhetoric by Apollodorus of Pergamum (the teacher of Augustus), he allegedly invented the practice of topiary around the turn of the millennium and he wrote three gastronomic works entitled *The Cook*, *The Fishmonger*, and *The Pickle-Maker*, each of which instructed readers how

Also surely to be associated with Eutrapelus is the mime Volumnius (*RE* 7a), who was with the army of Mark Antony and Octavian at Philippi, captured by Brutus and executed by Messalla. Like Asellius Sabinus after him, he could not stop joking: Plutarch *Brutus* 45.1.

⁵³ Pliny *NH* 8.170 (Loeb translation, H. Rackham).

⁵⁴ Cf. the Appendix below, p. 192. Storks were out of favor by the early years of Augustus: Cornelius Nepos *ap. Pliny NH* 10.60.

to prepare urban feasts and sumptuous banquets, *urbanas mensas et lauta convivia*.⁵⁵ Leading the pack was the prime target of the moralist, the notorious Marcus Apicius himself, professor of popinarian science (*scientiam popinae professus*), *ad omne luxus ingenium natus, nepotum omnium altissimus gurgis, exemplum gulae*, πλουσιώτατος τρυφήτης. On a cooler estimate, Apicius moved easily in the highest circles, among consular friends (Junius Blaesus, Fabius Maximus), he was an intimate of Sejanus, and he was well-known to Tiberius himself and to his son, Drusus Caesar. He was rich, he was creative, he held firm opinions, and he wrote about his passion. Living the life of Arcestratus, he also travelled by land and by sea in search of fine comestibles.⁵⁶

If Volumnius the Witty indeed wrote in verse, unlike the writers just mentioned he would also fit into the tradition of clever poets who were heavily influenced by Attic comedy, writing for a sophisticated elite, deeply interested in the refinement of fine dining, and working with comic traditions of animated foodstuffs and Homeric parody. From Arcestratus and Matro through the Alexandrian poet of “The Oyster”, through Ennius, Lucilius, Varro, and Volumnius, through Horace and Maecenas and others now lost to us, and then on to Martial and Juvenal, one fundamental characteristic is clear: the literary tradition lies in *poetry*, not prose. Not a word of the dialogue of Asellius Sabinus survives, yet a hypothesis is justified: the contest among his four tidbits was a *poem*. The nearest known relative to the *Certamen*, as W. Teuffel pointed out long ago, is the *Iudicium coci et pistoris* of Vespa. A much later *jeu d’esprit*, learned, elegant, witty, and packed with gastronomic jokes, it presents a baker and a cook in contention before Vulcan, the god of fire, each asserting the superiority of his craft. Not surprisingly, it does its business in a mere 99 hexameters. Sabinus’ *Certamen* also aligns with a substantial body of brief

⁵⁵ Columella 12.4.2: *tum demum nostri generis, postquam a bellis vacuum fuit, quasi quodam tributum victui humano conferre dedignati non sunt, ut M. Ambivius, et Maenas Licinius, tum etiam C. Matius; quibus stadium fuit pistoris et coci net minus cellarii diligentiam suis praeceptis institutere*. The image of the practical Romans imposing as usual order and discipline on the diligent but clueless foreigners for the good of humanity is priceless. Syme (1986b, with earlier bibliography) is essential on the identity and social stature of the three authors. Mena: *CIL* VI 33968. Ambivius: *PIR*² A 557, with Syme. Matius: Columella 12.46.1; *PIR*² M 369 + Quintilian 3.1.18.

⁵⁶ *PIR* G 91 conveniently collects most of the sources. The scope and nature of his writings need investigation. Culinary travel, mocked by critics but to be expected in a student of Arcestratus: *Suda* A 3297 Apicius, Athenaeus 1.7a-c; cf. Seneca *Vita Beata* 11.4. The best modern introduction to the problems raised by Apicius the man and “Apicius” the cookbook is Grainger (2007), aimed at a non-classical audience.

fables, most of them in verse and depicting disputes about the superiority of each contestant's virtues, often specifically for the benefit of mankind, disputes between two gods or two men or two natural phenomena or, especially, two animals or two plants. The jewel in the crown, which would be known to every literate Roman, was Callimachus' fourth *Iamb*, pitting the laurel against the olive.⁵⁷

If we accept that Sabinus' contribution was a poem working in a certain tradition, the picture snaps into focus: we can understand why Tiberius Caesar rewarded him in princely fashion, and striking parallels are at hand.

Tiberius took a true gastronome's interest in food and drink. His informed enthusiasm has been obscured for posterity by crude anecdotes about miserly feasting and heavy drinking, but it was recovered in a brilliant late paper by Ronald Syme, "Diet on Capri". According to Pliny, Tiberius was "enormously pleased" by a pear named after him. His *auctoritas* imparted "a special glory" on African ovens for smoking grapes. He "rebuked" his son Drusus Caesar for following the gourmand Apicius' over-fastidious rejection of cabbage sprout. He took "marvelous pleasure" in melons, and contrived to enjoy them almost year round, through moveable frames and greenhouses. He made famous (literally "ennobled") the parsnip, "demanding" it every year from Germany. He "very wittily" noted that a weed growing in Upper Germany was similar to asparagus. And he was wont to observe that doctors had conspired to "ennoble" the wine of Surrentum, which was recommended for convalescents since it was thin and healthy, but was otherwise just "well-produced vinegar". In short, strong opinions, vigorously expressed. Cabbage sprout was a delicacy, *laetam formosamque cymam* as Celsus describes it, and it takes us into a gourmets' debate: rejected by Apicius and Drusus Caesar, it was welcome at the poetic feasts of Lucilius and Volumnius Eutrapelus, and well regarded by Tiberius. Lucilius' banquet had paired *viride cyma* with *asparagi molles*: Tiberius was presumably teasing asparagus connoisseurs with his common German weed. He knew his epicures. Presented with the gift of an enormous mullet, weighing some 4½ pounds, he sent it to the *Macellum* for sale, confidently predicting that it would be purchased by

⁵⁷ Vespa: Teuffel (1871); Baldwin (1987) offers a useful introduction and commentary. Fables: conveniently collected in translation at Gibbs (2002) 93-104, with references to several others. Despite modern assumptions, there is absolutely no reason to assume that Sabinus' *Certamen* was a work in prose.

either Apicius or P. Octavius. The two gourmets bid against each other, Octavius won, and the astute Caesar was richer by 5,000 sesterces.⁵⁸

Tiberius enjoyed a party, but he could be difficult. Suetonius tells us that he took great pleasure in his Greek dining companions, *convictores Graeculos*, yet he was hard on them, exiling one and banning another from his company (even, so we are told, driving the latter to his death), for slights real or imagined. Anecdote aside, context is everything: Tiberius would propose questions for discussion with his learned guests over dinner, based on his reading that day. Seleucus the grammarian fell foul of him when Tiberius learned that the man had pumped his servants to learn what the reading was, so that he might come prepared. Lively cultural discussion at Rome veered easily into combat sport, but the free exchange of views was severely restricted when one of the combatants was an intellectual and opinionated *princeps*. Favorinus would raise a huge laugh among his friends a century later, under Hadrian, when he urged them to let him believe that the master of 30 legions was more learned than everyone else. Tiberius was surely not unaware of this. He particularly loved to torment the grammarians — “a species of men whom, as we have mentioned, he especially sought out” — with ridiculously pedantic questions about Greek mythology.⁵⁹ The grammarians were happy to oblige with answers.

Tiberius was notoriously addicted to three “Hellenistic” poets, Euphron, Rhianus, and Parthenius, all of them prolific, erudite, and formidably ingenious, and all devout Homerists. He composed Greek poems imitating them, and he stocked public libraries with their writings and their images. “Because of this, many of the learned men competed to publish a great deal about these poets for him,” presumably texts, commentaries, and the like. This avalanche of scholarship has vanished, though distant

⁵⁸ Syme (1989). Pliny *NH* 15.54, *maxime placuere*; 14.16, *gloria praecipua*; 19.137, *non sine castigatione*; 19.64, *mira voluptate*, cf. Columella 11. 3.53; 19.90, *nobilitavit*; 19.145, *non inficeto ... dicto*; 14. 64, *generosum acetum*. *Viride cyma* paired by Lucilius with *asparagi molles*: 945M = 986W. *Mullum ingentis formae*: Seneca *Epp.* 95.42.

⁵⁹ Dinner conversations: *S* 56. Favorinus explaining why he yielded to Hadrian's objection to a word he had used: *Non recte suadetis, familiares, qui non patemini, me illum doctiorem omnibus credere, qui habet triginta legiones* (*HA Hadrian* 15.12-13). *Grammaticos, quod genus hominum praecipue, ut diximus appetebat*: *S* 70.3. Note the verb, *appetere*, which can also mean to attack. When Suetonius, or his source, tells us that Tiberius' passion for mythology extended to absurdities and ridicule, it is Tiberius who is the mocker and his grammarians the mocked, contrary to all modern translations. Competitive publications: *S* 70.2.

echoes may linger behind the surviving fragments of and testimonia on the three poets. Yet chance has preserved a hint of something strikingly similar, in Diogenes Laertius' opening to his life of the third century sceptic philosopher Timon of Phlius: "Our Apollonides of Nicaea, in the first book of his commentary on *The Silloi*, which he dedicated to Tiberius Caesar, says that Timon was the son of Timarchus and a Phlian by birth." Timon slips easily into the company of Euphorion and the others, for he was an immensely sophisticated satiric poet as well, and another devoted Homerist. His verse *Silloi* sharply mocked the battles of the various philosophical schools in strongly Homeric terms — not quite a cento, just under 80% of its surviving fragments have been shown to offer clear Homeric parodies.⁶⁰

Perhaps there was even a gastronomic theme in Apollonides' commentary. Tiberius seems to have shared in the contemporary "craze for the surmullet": someone presented him with the 4½ pound mullet that fetched 5,000 sesterces at auction; legend had it that a fisherman climbed a cliff to present him with a mullet on Capri, with unfortunate consequences; and he allegedly deplored the sale of three mullets for 30,000 sesterces.⁶¹ It is likely that Timon's *Silloi* had a fishing scene, with the schools of fish representing the competing schools of philosophy, and that Plato was the leader of them all, πλατίστακος, the Big Mullet. The matter is not clear, but Tiberius would have been amused.⁶²

Be that as it may, Timon's lively satire and sharp Homeric parody surely appealed to Tiberius, the sardonic devotee of Odysseus, and to a grammarian eager to win his favor. They bring us again into the world of learned Greek poetry, with a contest of words presented as a Homeric battle and perhaps a nod to gastronomy. It is a world into which Sabinus' *Certamen* likewise fits comfortably.

A highly speculative biography of a man about whom we know almost nothing might read as follows. Asellius Sabinus was born sometime in the latter half of the first century BC and he died in the 30s AD. His family was

⁶⁰ Favorite poets: *S* 70. 2-3. Timon's *Silloi*: Diogenes Laertius 9.109. For a brief survey of the literature: Champlin (2013) 233-234; *passim* for Tiberius' obsession with Odysseus.

⁶¹ Mulletts: Seneca *Epp.* 95.42; *S* 60; *S* 34.1. Craze: Andrews (1949).

⁶² On the likelihood of the fishing scene and of Plato the mullet, see the judicious discussion at Clayman (2009) 107-112. Problems arise both in the interpretation of fragments and in textual variation. The *platistakos* was discussed by Dorion in his *On Fishes*: Athenaeus 118c.

senatorial, they and he flourished under and through the patronage of Augustus and Tiberius, and he moved easily in aristocratic circles. He was wealthy. His culture was that of the intellectual and social elite of his day. His aristocratic wit was considered the height of sophistication by a most knowledgeable critic. He was committed to real oratory, even to the point of teaching it, but indulged as well in the contemporary craze for the imaginary, that is, in competitive declamation. He had a sincere interest in food and its preparation, another passion of the day. And he conveyed that interest in a gastronomic poem replete with epic overtones, a clever parody which both satirized and enshrined that passion. The poem (not a word of which survives) was a serious literary creation with a long pedigree, a work both refined and erudite, and it was handsomely rewarded by another most knowledgeable critic and patron. In person he was charming and urbane, a Noel Coward *avant la lettre*.

HIS DEATH

Asellius Sabinus could not refrain from making jokes even in dire circumstances. *Nimius risus adfectator*, as was remarked of the ill-fated Cicero. Seneca was upset. Everyone knew that Sabinus should not have jested amidst his troubles and dangers. How could he have done it? Our author's tone here is ominous but it is not conclusive, and his sons did not need to be told what happened to Sabinus in the end. His fate is not recorded: he may have perished in prison; he may have been executed; he may have been acquitted. Tacitus and Dio, whose histories are essentially complete for the period from 32 through 37, do not include him in their bloody vignettes of the carnage of those years. In Suetonius he is merely a passing figure in an insignificant note from Augustus and a passing item in a catalog of Tiberius' supposed transgressions. How did he die? Two scenarios might occur.

The gourmand may well have starved to death in prison. Execution by inanition was purportedly a specialty of Tiberius the gastronome. Food and starvation overwhelm the narratives. His former wife Julia he destroyed in her exile by ill treatment and starvation, hoping that no one would notice the murder since she had been away for so long. He either executed his widowed daughter-in-law and niece Livilla or, so Dio had heard, left her to her mother, Antonia, who starved her to death. His friend Asinius Gallus, the second husband of Tiberius' first wife, survived in prison for

as many as three years, kept barely alive by poor and inadequate food, and deprived of human contact, except when he was force fed. Rumor had it that he died of starvation, whether voluntary or enforced. We are told that he dined with Tiberius on the very day of his arrest. Tiberius' mistreatment of Agrippina, his stepdaughter and widowed daughter-in-law, was even more egregiously gastronomical, if that were possible. Forewarned by Sejanus, she had declined all food at a banquet with Tiberius. Tiberius purposely offered her an apple, knowing that she would refuse. He then complained that he was being accused of poisoning and he stopped inviting her to dinner. Rumor had it then that her death was being prepared. Years later, in island exile she tried to starve herself, but he ordered that she be force fed. She nevertheless managed to starve herself to death — or perhaps murder was dressed up to look like suicide. Tiberius had earlier slain her son, his grandson, Nero, by starvation in his island exile. "They think" an executioner had terrified him into "voluntary death". And Nero's brother Drusus was likewise slain by starvation, but in the depths of the Palatine. Again, "they think" that Drusus was so deprived of nourishment that he tried to eat the stuffing of his mattress. How appropriate then that, when on his deathbed, soon after his last banquet, Tiberius revived enough to demand food, his surviving grandson Gaius, the brother of Nero and Drusus, refused it to him.⁶³

Tiberius' alleged appetite for starvation reflects his reputation as a man interested in food. On his deathbed Augustus had lamented the fate of the Roman people, to be ground by such slow jaws, and one might suspect from the starvation anecdotes that the hostile contemporary historian took pleasure in playing on the image of the tyrant as flesh-eating, blood-drinking monster, the sadist who enjoyed dining with his intended victim just before he took his life.⁶⁴ Rumor about events hidden from the

⁶³ Julia (14 AD): T 1.53.2, *inopia et tabe longe peremit*; D 57.18.1a, *κακουχίας καὶ λιμοῦ* (both passages are clearly dependent on a single source, cf. S 50.1). Livilla (31 AD): D 58.11.7. Asinius Gallus (33 AD): T 6.23.1; D 58.3.3-6, 23.6. Agrippina (33 AD): S 53.1-2; T 4.54, 6.25. Nero (31 AD): S 54.2, cf. 61.1 and D 58.8.4 for the date). Drusus (33 AD): S 54.2, D 58.25.4, T 6.23-24. Tiberius (37 AD): S 73.2, D 58.28.3, cf. T 6.50.4-5. Self-starvation is a theme of the age: T 4.35.4., Seneca *Ad Marciam* 22.6 (Cremutius Cordus); T 6.26.1-2, D 58.21.2 (Cocceius Nerva); T 6.48.1 (Vibius Marsus, pretended). Tiberius himself had set the pace in 6 BC: S 10.2.

⁶⁴ E.g., S 59.1: *Fastidit vinum, quia iam sitit iste cruorem: / tam bibit hunc auide, quam bibit ante merum*. Asinius Gallus was not the only victim deceived just before his downfall: cf. Libo Drusus (T 2.28.2) and Marcus Paconius (S 61.6). Tiberius reminded Matthew Arnold of a cat watching a canary: "Cruel, but composed and bland, / Dumb,

public eye certainly renders suspect the accounts of the six deaths just mentioned. Yet there can be no doubt that Tiberius was a cruel and vindictive man, and Jerzy Linderski demonstrated beyond a doubt that legal and epigraphical evidence confirms the literary picture of his treatment of Julia: whether she died of starvation or not, her end was miserable and premeditated.⁶⁵ But the real shock is the death of Drusus. The account of it is not one of rumor and innuendo. It was confirmed by documents read out to the senate, eyewitness records of daily beatings and terrifying threats, verbatim transcriptions of the dying man's curses on his grandfather, and of his final, unheeded pleas for food. Tiberius really did starve people to death. A man who could treat his own grandson so savagely would have no compunction about leaving a former friend to die of hunger in prison, be he Asinius Gallus or Asellius Sabinus. He had done much worse with many others.⁶⁶ Even if he was not responsible for the death of Sabinus he would surely be aware of it, and compliant senators were aware that starvation was the order of the day.

But we can prefer to believe that the gourmet's eloquent plea to the senate for nourishment was successful, that he won his release from prison soon thereafter, and that he retired to live out his few remaining years in quiet luxury on the Bay of Naples. The name Asellius is Oscan, and it is apparently attested in *crater ille delicatus* at Puteoli, Herculaneum, and Pompeii.⁶⁷ About a kilometer north of Pompeii a sumptuous early imperial villa was excavated in the early 1900s.⁶⁸ Spacious, comfortable, richly and tastefully decorated and appointed, it lay on the pleasant western slope of

inscrutable and grand, / So Tiberius might have sat, / Had Tiberius been a cat." ("Poor Matthias", 1882).

⁶⁵ Linderski (1988).

⁶⁶ Whatever the charges against Drusus were, and however hostile the original now-lost source might have been, the record of Tacitus 6.24, with Dio 58.25.4, cannot be explained away.

⁶⁷ Oscan: *Imagines Italicae* 1350-1351 (Lucania, c. 300 BC), cf. 821 (Pompeii: possibly G. Asillius). The *gentilicium* is "certainly of Campanian origin": Castrén (1983) 138. *CIL* X.2109 (Puteoli); IV.7297a, 8571 (Pompeii); *ZPE* 140 (2002) 228 (Herculaneum, or possibly Nola). Brick stamps at Pompeii suggest one source of family income: Vetter *Handbuch* 37, 37a, 37b.

⁶⁸ A full account of the building, its decoration and its contents was rendered by Matteo della Corte in 1921, and significantly amplified and brought up-to-date by Grete Stefani in 1998. Della Corte (1921) begins with a summary, both informed and lyrical, of the villa's perfections. Stefani (1998), despite the title, carefully presents not only the paintings but all that is known of the villa's ruins and its many and various artifacts. Color photos of a few of the wall paintings are provided by the author at: G. Stefani, 'Villa rustica detta di Asellius, agro pompeiano', in: P.G. Guzzo (ed.), *Pompeii ~ Picta Fragmenta*, Turin 1997,

a hill facing the bay. A remarkable unity of design and remnants of Second Style wall painting date the villa's construction by a wealthy and strong-minded owner to the mid- to late first century BC. It was very unusual. Despite being a *villa rustica* surrounded by other such villas, there is no sign of any agricultural enterprise. Perfectly oriented, it was an almost perfect square, close to 32 meters by 32 meters. Its central garden was surrounded on three sides by harmoniously balanced groups of rooms, an exceptional number of them devoted to entertainment, their outer perimeter being a portico which could be shuttered at will. But the southern flank of the square was completely open and exposed to the sun. A bronze stamp found in one of the rooms bears the image of a wine jug and what should be the name of its owner, "Asel(lius?) Pro(culus?)".⁶⁹ It would be pleasant to imagine the charming Asellius Sabinus in quiet retirement, as he enjoyed a cup of young Pompeian wine,⁷⁰ the company of his son Proculus, his delightful villa, and the southern exposure with its stunning view of the Bay of Naples. Excavated in 1903 and 1904, the rich contents of the villa were mostly dispersed among private hands, as was the custom of the day, and the ruins were subsequently reburied. Its precise location remains unknown.

APPENDIX: ASELLII AND ASELLIONES

There was a family of Asellii in the senate of the late Republic. The evidence for them is elusive and confusing; it is handled tendentiously or not at all in standard works of reference; and it involves disputed readings or emendations in the texts of no fewer than three major ancient historians. None of the following appears under the rubric "Asellius" in any version of *Pauly-Wissowa*:

- (1) Cassius Dio tells of a praetor, Λεύκιος Ἀσύλλιος, who resigned the praetorship because of long-term ill health in 33 BC. Caesar (later Augustus) appointed his son in his place.⁷¹ Pighius' emendation of "Asullius" to "Asellius" is accepted in standard texts. The name "Asullius" appears very rarely on inscriptions, but it is found only once elsewhere in a literary source, viz.:

p. 82-84; and G. Stefani, 'Villa of Asellius', *Man and the Environment in the Territory of Vesuvius*, Pompeii, 2010, p. 118-119.

⁶⁹ The stamp reads THALLI / ASEL.PRO: Stefani (1998) 49, with drawing. It is commonly accepted that Asel.Pro represents the name of the owner, Thallus being his slave. Della Corte (1921) proposed the unlikely expansion of *Thalli Asel(li) Pro(curator)*.

⁷⁰ *Pompeianis summum decem annorum incrementum est, nihil senecta conferente*: Pliny *NH* 14.70.

⁷¹ 49.43.7. Not in *PW* or *PIR*².

- (2) A fragment of Diodorus Siculus preserved by Constantine Porphyrogenitus which tells of a good governor of Sicily (probably to be assigned to a little before 92 BC). It introduces this man, who must have served as praetor previously, as Λεύκιος Ἀσύλλιος, that is, the same name as the praetor of 33 in Dio. A few sentences later it calls him Σύλλιος.⁷²
- (3) In *Satires* 2.2, at 49-50, Horace tells us that baby storks (*ciconiae*) were safe from gourmands until *auctor praetorius* enlightened us. The commentator known as Pseudo-Acro notes: "A certain Asellius was the praetor, who first invented the custom of eating storks. Others want Sempronius to be the praetor, who after many things taught that even storks could be proper to eat, or their young." And Porphyrio chimes in: "Rufus the ex-praetor was said to have started the eating of young storks. And when he had been defeated for the praetorship [*sic*] he earned this epigram ..." Four verses follow, to the effect that the electorate thus avenged the death of the storks.⁷³
- (4) A senatorial Μάρκος Ἀσέλλιος Μάρκου Μαρκία appears as a witness in a senatus consultum of April 11th, 44 BC, quoted by Josephus at *AJ* 14.220. The *paradosis* offers Ἀσέλλιος and Σασέλλιος, and conjectures include Gronovius' Ἀκύλιος and Niese's Γέλλιος. Niese printed Σέλλιος in his text.

All of this confusing evidence was treated by two master prosopographers of the twentieth century, Friedrich Münzer and Ernst Badian, but in arbitrary fashion.

According to Diodorus, the proconsul of Sicily, "Lucius Asullius" (no. 2 above) had a legate named Gaius Longus. Münzer enshrined the following in *Pauly-Wissowa* without argument, in his treatment of the Sempronii, *PW* no. 18, L. Sempronius Asellio: "Klein (Die Verwaltungsbeamten von Sizilien und Sardinien 59f.) quite rightly drew on this C. Longus to ascertain the corrupted name of the governor; he *should* be a L. Asellio, and both men belong to the Gens Sempronia." That would *perhaps* make him a close relative, maybe the older brother, of A. Sempronius Asellio, the urban praetor murdered in the forum in 89 BC (*PW* 17), and the two men *might* be sons of the historian Sempronius Asellio, who had served with Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia (*PW* 16).

Badian, in a paper on the Sempronii Aselliones, some of it intricate to the verge of incomprehensibility, proposed that the name of the other "Lucius Asullius", Dio's praetor of 33 (no. 1 above), should likewise be emended to produce another L. (Sempronius) Asellio.⁷⁴

At *PW* Sempronius 79, Münzer discussed the C. Sempronius Rufus whose complicated financial dealings are referred to in six letters of Cicero, who despised the man. He *might* be the Sempronius referred to in two other letters from the

⁷² 37.8.1-4, from Constantine's *Exc.* 2 (1), p. 318.

⁷³ Pseudo-Acro *ad loc.*: *Asellius quidam praetor fuit, qui usum comedendarum ciconiarum primus invenit. Alii Rufum praetorem volunt, qui post multa etiam ciconias docuit esui aptas posse vel pullos earum.* Porphyrio: *Rufus praetorius instituisse traditur, ut ciconiarum pulli manducarentur. Isque cum repulsam praeturae tulisset, tale epigramma meruit [etc.]*"

⁷⁴ Badian (1968).

year 43 and that Sempronius in turn *might* be the subject of a *Sempronianum senatus consultum* in a third letter. The praetor Sempronius of Pseudo-Acro and the praetor Rufus of Porphyrio (no. 3 above) are to be combined into one man and to be identified with the man in Cicero. Indeed, the *Commentator Cruquianus* gives the full name as Asinius Sempronius Rufus, hence it may be that we should emend that name in the light of what we know about the gens Sempronia to produce “C. Sempronius Asellio Rufus”: “from all these scattered notices we can obtain a unified, admittedly very hypothetical portrait of the man.” Badian offered lengthy supporting argumentation, but nothing essentially new, while allowing in the end that this man could not be fitted into any stemma of the Aselliones.⁷⁵

And finally, at *PW* Gellius 7, Münzer tacitly accepted Niese’s emended reading of “Marcus Gellius” for the “Marcus Asellius” of the *senatus consultum* in Josephus (no. 4 above), and identified him with the Marcus Gellius who was subjected to a Ciceronian witticism for reading a document in a clear loud voice in the senate (Plutarch *Cicero* 27.5).

Little of this is compelling.

- (1) Münzer summarily dismissed as incorrect the observation, by P. Groebe, that the M. Gellius of the Cicero anecdote was an *apparitor*: in fact there is no indication or likelihood that the man was a senator. Münzer also ignored the fact that “Gellius” in Josephus is an emendation. The texts of the *senatus consulta* in Josephus are admittedly problematic, but three assumptions are involved to produce “Gellius”, none of them necessary. “M. Asellius M.f.” is generally accepted as a senator.⁷⁶
- (2) The conversion of the two praetors named “Lucius Asullius” into “Lucius Asellio” is gratuitous, based on the presumption that the legate “C. Longus” was a Sempronius, which is mere speculation — the cognomen Longus is very common, and there were a lot of new men in the Roman senate. It also seems to be based on the tacit assumption that the man was a *gentilis* of his commanding officer, which need not be the case.
- (3) Indeed, Badian’s argument should be reversed: Pighius’ emendation of “Asullius” into “Asellius” for the praetor of 33 (which is closer to the *paradosis* than “Asellio”) can be applied to the homonymous praetor of the 90s.
- (4) The *praetorius* who added storks to the cuisine is problematic. “Sempronius the praetor” and “Rufus the ex-praetor” have been combined to produce “Sempronius Rufus”, which may or may not be correct (the *Commentator Cruquianus* is worthless here⁷⁷), but something has gone embarrassingly

⁷⁵ *Ib.* p. 3-6. D’Arms (1981) 48-55 offers a fine reconstruction of Sempronius’ tangled affairs. Unfortunately he begins his account with “C. Sempronius Rufus was certainly in the senate in 43 B.C., and apparently *praetorius* already in the preceding year ...” There is no evidence for this, as Badian showed in detail at (1968) 4-5 n. 18.

⁷⁶ Badian (1968) 3 n. 13 cautiously allows that M. Asellius M.f., accepted by *MRR* may be correct. The supplement *MRR* III gives a judicious summary p. 26; but cf. p. 99, accepting the Gellius in Cicero.

⁷⁷ He has simply read his two predecessors and combined them, and “Asinius” should be his reading of “Asellius”, not, *pace* Münzer, “Asellio”.

wrong. How could “Rufus the ex-praetor” who cooked storks be punished by the people not electing him to the praetorship?⁷⁸

- (5) Above all, “Asellio” obscures the clear meaning of Pseudo-Acro: “(Some say that) the praetor was Asellius, others want him to be Sempronius”. That is, rightly or wrongly, in the scholiast’s mind these are two different men, candidates proposed by earlier commentators. It is an unfortunate coincidence that a branch of the Sempronii bore the similar sounding cognomen Asellio, which is actually attested for only two men, the second-century historian and the praetor of 89, with whom it disappears. All else is modern speculation, “admittedly very hypothetical”. Why not trust the reading in Pseudo-Acro?

If we strip away modern accretions, we are left with a senatorial M. Asellius in 44 BC and a senatorial Asellius, *praenomen* unknown, the praetor who may have introduced storks into Roman cuisine at an unknown date. The gastronome is presumably one of the following, their names all emended from “Asullius” in the Greek: L. Asellius, praetor before c. 92 BC; L. Asellius, praetor in 33; or Asellius, *praenomen* unknown, praetor suffect in 33. Significantly there is even, as so often in the late days of the Republic, a convenient legendary ancestor to certify the family as senatorial, M.(?) Asellius, allegedly tribune of the plebs in 422.⁷⁹ In short the evidence for a senatorial family of Asellii in the first century BC is solid if elusive, but its reconstruction is simpler and more convincing than the Ossa on Pelion of imaginary Sempronii Aselliones.

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⁷⁸ A question overlooked by Münzer and Badian. Desperation is in order: did he run twice? Does *praetura* mean consulship?

⁷⁹ Livy 4.42.1, a problematic text, with Ogilvie’s note *ad loc.* One of four tribunes nobly loyal to their commander: Valerius Maximus 6. 5. 2. Not in *PW* but caught by *MRR sub anno*.

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LA PRAEFFECTURA FABRUM, I COLLEGIA FABRUM ED UN PREFETTO TERGESTINO*

Abstract: Since the book that H. Maué devoted to the *praefectura fabrum* in 1887, the relationship between the post of ‘prefect of the engineers’ and the *collegia fabrum* has been a matter of scholarly discussion. The debate hinges on two inscriptions concerning *L. Papirianus, praefectus fabrum Romae et Tergeste*, and on the widely held belief that there were (at least) two different kinds of *praefectura fabrum*: a military post awarded by *imperium*-holding magistrates to individuals with a military background, and a command over the *collegia fabrum*, assigned by the emperor to the members of the civic elites recruited across the Empire. The scholarly view that juxtaposed the *praefectura fabrum* with the collegial magistracies was intended to solve the puzzle of the role of the *praefectura* under the Principate, when it was often associated with prominent municipal careers. This interpretation, however, is untenable for a number of reasons: notably the different institutional nature of the *praefectura fabrum* and the *praefectura collegii fabrum*, and the picture conveyed by the epigraphic evidence for both posts. This paper offers a re-examination of the available documentation, and proposes a new interpretation of the Papirianus inscriptions.

Fin dai primi studi dedicati alla *praefectura fabrum*, la possibilità di un legame con i *collegia fabrum* è stata avanzata a più riprese. Discussa all’interno di numerosi contributi, essa resta tuttora un tema trattato con notevole prudenza. Indipendentemente dall’ovvia similarità onomastica, questo accostamento è soprattutto fondato sulla diffusa convinzione che la *praefectura fabrum* potesse configurarsi in due distinti incarichi: uno prevalentemente militare, al seguito di un magistrato *cum imperio*, e uno essenzialmente civile, in relazione ai *collegia fabrum*.

L’intento di questo contributo è innanzitutto di dimostrare come non sussista alcun solido elemento a supporto di questo accostamento e come, in effetti, non sia neppure possibile distinguere diverse fattispecie di *praefectura fabrum*. A questo scopo, sarà necessario procedere ad una rassegna della documentazione disponibile e al riesame di due note iscrizioni triestine. Si tratta di due basi marmoree, rinvenute nel campanile della Cattedrale di San Giusto a Trieste, che conservano la carriera di *L. Varius Papirius Papirianus*, duoviro *iure dicundo* e quinquennale, flamine di

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Adriano, pontefice, augure¹. Una delle due — meglio conservata — fu destinata allo stesso Papiriano dal collegio dei *fabri* di *Tergeste*: questi lo avevano riconosciuto come patrono, una figura influente e attiva nella difesa degli interessi del sodalizio². In entrambe, compare una titolatura di difficile interpretazione: *praefectus fabrum Romae et Tergeste*. Th. Mommsen, nel suo commento all'edizione nel *CIL*, suppose che Papiriano avesse esercitato la prefettura dei *fabri* per un magistrato a Roma e fosse poi stato prefetto del collegio dei *fabri* a Trieste. Questa tesi, generalmente accettata, sembra avvalorare l'ipotesi di una sovrapposizione fra *praefectura fabrum* e *collegia fabrum* e merita perciò una trattazione dedicata.

La confusione fra *praefectura fabrum* e mondo associativo è stata oggetto di dibattito fin dal 1887, quando H.C. Maué³, che — a mia conoscenza, primo e solo — dedicò una monografia alla prefettura dei *fabri*, sostenne che, in età imperiale, un prefetto fosse assegnato dall'imperatore stesso ai *collegia fabrum*. Questa nomina modificava la natura dell'incarico dei prefetti, che, da pubblici ufficiali (dell'esercito o meno), erano resi funzionari di un'associazione privata. Lo studioso tedesco non riscontrò una contraddizione in questo, perché riconosceva ai *fabri* una speciale importanza per l'amministrazione imperiale. Questa attenzione non discendeva soltanto dall'estensione ed importanza dei *collegia fabrum*, ma era motivata, secondo Maué, dal fatto che, al fianco di *dendrophori* e *centonarii*, i *fabri* sarebbero stati impiegati nella lotta contro gli incendi — un fatto che ne spiegava l'organizzazione tradizionalmente ritenuta paramilitare. L'ipotesi di un loro coinvolgimento diretto in questo servizio essenziale di pubblica utilità era stata il fulcro della tesi di

¹ *CIL* V 545 = *INSCRIT* X.4 59: *L(ucio) Vario / Papirio / Papiriano / Ilvir(o) i(ure) d(icundo) Ilv(iro) i(ure) d(icundo) q(uin)q(uennali) / praef(ecto) fabr(um) Romae / et Ter/ geste / flam(ini) Hadr(ianali) pont(ifici) augur(i) / collegium fabrum / patrono merent(i).* *CIL* V 546 = *INSCRIT* X.4 55: *[donis donato] / ob bellum Parth(icum) [torquibus] / armillis phaleris co[rona ---] / L(ucius) Varius Papirius Papirianus pa[te]r / Ilvir i(ure) d(icundo) Ilvir i(ure) d(icundo) quinq(uennalis) Tergest(e) / praef(ectus) fabrum Romae et Terg(este).* Quest'ultima iscrizione fu dedicata da Papiriano — definito *pater* — ad un individuo il cui nome non è conservato. *CIL* V 545 era già stata identificata da F. Feliciano ed inserita nella sua *Sylloge*, mentre *CIL* V 546 è stata individuata e trascritta da P. Kandler nel 1842. Per queste iscrizioni, cfr. anche Alföldy (1984) 86, nrr. 37 e 40; Vidulli Torlo (2001) 40-41.

² Si tratta di *CIL* V 545. Sulla dignità di patrono nei *collegia*, si veda Tran (2006) 450-459.

³ Maué (1887); cfr. *Id.* (1886), una monografia dedicata ai *collegia di fabri, centonarii e dendrophori*.

Hirschfeld⁴ e non era stata messa in discussione nemmeno da A. Bloch, che pure avversò la tesi di Maué⁵. Le teorie di quest'ultimo sarebbero state comunque molto influenti, perché, oltre a dare conto di una similitudine onomastica innegabile, trovavano qualche riscontro nell'epigrafia: anzitutto nelle iscrizioni di Papiriano. Inoltre, una sovrapposizione fra prefettura e *collegia* poteva contribuire a spiegare le numerose iscrizioni di età imperiale, in cui essa era così frequentemente associata ad incarichi di rilievo locale o, ancora, a posizioni dell'amministrazione civile⁶. I contributi successivamente dedicati da E. Kornemann, C. Jullian e W. Liebenam⁷ offrirono una sintesi efficace sul dibattito e sulle argomentazioni di Maué e Bloch, ma non si proponevano di offrire soluzioni definitive al problema.

Partendo dalle conclusioni di Bloch e Pflaum e dedicato ad aspetti specifici — lo sviluppo della *praefectura fabrum* nelle carriere militari in età giulio-claudia —, l'influente contributo di B. Dobson affrontò la prefettura dei *fabri* con grande accuratezza, ma lasciò aperto il problema di una possibile sovrapposizione fra prefettura dei *fabri* e *collegia fabrum*⁸. Se lo storico inglese chiarì lo sviluppo dell'incarico nel corso dell'età giulio-claudia — caratterizzato da una progressiva semplificazione, da posizione affidata a personalità d'esperienza a sinecura concessa ad individui all'inizio della propria carriera (una pratica consolidata a partire dal tempo di Claudio)⁹ —, con la sua dichiarata attenzione alle sole carriere di militari, egli supportò implicitamente la tesi di Maué, distinguendo almeno due carriere. I prefetti di Dobson erano militari d'esperienza o notabili locali, il cui margine operativo poteva essere puramente formale. Con molta cautela, Dobson ammise inoltre la possibilità che i prefetti esclusivamente attestati in contesti municipali potessero essere in qualche

⁴ Hirschfeld (1884) 193-205.

⁵ Bloch (1903) 111.

⁶ La natura dell'incarico era (e sarebbe rimasta a lungo) sfuggente. Una buona dimostrazione fu offerta dalla pubblicazione della *Rangordnung* nel 1908: sovente accompagnata da incarichi civili o locali, la prefettura non fu introdotta dal Domaszewski nella sua nota trattazione dedicata all'esercito romano.

⁷ Kornemann *RE* VI 2 'Fabri' 1918-1925; Jullian (1918) 947-959; Liebenam (1922) 14-18. C. Jullian aveva in parte accolto le posizioni di Maué, al contrario di E. Kornemann e W. Liebenam.

⁸ Bloch (1905) 368-371; Pflaum (1950) 196-197 e 218; (1960-1961) 958; Dobson (1966), sopr. 67-68; anche D. B. Saddington (1985), che approcciò la prefettura ad integrazione del lavoro di Dobson, lasciò inalterato il problema.

⁹ Millar (1963) 196-197 era appunto convinto che l'incarico fosse solo una sinecura, non implicando alcun servizio attivo.

misura riconducibili ai *collegia fabrum*. Nonostante l'ottimo contributo di R. Sablayrolles, dedicato ai prefetti dalla *Narbonensis*, già precisasse l'assenza di evidenti legami con i *collegia*, l'idea di una sovrapposizione fra *praefectura fabrum* e *fabri* non ha mai del tutto abbandonato gli studi, progressivamente interessati a definire il problema con la disamina di singoli contesti geografici¹⁰. Solo nel 2000, all'interno di un articolo dedicato alla prefettura dei *fabri* nel suo complesso, M. Cerva ha brevemente affrontato questa problematica sovrapposizione¹¹. La trattazione dello storico italiano aveva il pregio di fondarsi su solidi dati epigrafici, ma una nuova disamina mi sembra comunque opportuna¹². Innanzitutto, è necessario incrociare i dati noti sui *collegia fabrum* con quelli relativi alla prefettura dei *fabri*. In secondo luogo, si tenterà una riconsiderazione delle note iscrizioni triestine di Papiriano, sin qui l'indizio più forte di una sovrapposizione fra prefettura e *collegia fabrum*.

Secondo la tradizione, la creazione dei *collegia*¹³ risaliva ad età regia: le associazioni professionali erano state lo strumento per superare le antiche differenze tribali del *populus Romanus*¹⁴. Nel tempo, i *collegia* si erano estesi e moltiplicati, acquisendo, soprattutto nel corso del I sec. a.C., una notevole importanza politica¹⁵. La dimensione associativa offriva ai

¹⁰ Sablayrolles (1984). All'interno di un importante articolo dedicato ai *tribuni militum a populo*, si dichiarò contrario ad una simile sovrapposizione anche Nicolet (1967) 60. Seguendo l'esempio di Sablayrolles, che si era concentrato sulla *praefectura fabrum* nella sola *Narbonensis*, altri hanno seguito questa linea di ricerca per singole aree geografiche: ad esempio, Gil García (1993), (1994) — rispettivamente per la Spagna e la sola *Baetica*; Rizakis (2003) — *Philippi*; Álvarez Melero (2013) — province iberiche (al di là degli aspetti più propriamente regionali, lo studio comprende un'ottima sintesi su numerose problematiche relative alla *praefectura fabrum*).

¹¹ Cerva (2000) 191-194. In effetti, il principale limite al contributo di M. Cerva è costituito dalla sua stessa densità. Le molte tematiche affrontate all'interno di quella che egli, con modestia, aveva definito "un'introduzione", non permettevano di sviluppare tutti gli argomenti di un dibattito tanto lungo.

¹² Ciò è tanto più vero, perché — con varie sfumature di prudenza — la confusione fra prefettura e *collegia* è ancora presente in lavori successivi a quello di Cerva: Wierschowski (2001) sopr. 204 n. 44; Rizakis (2003); Gonzáles Herrero (2004); Bitner (2015).

¹³ Sui *collegia*, a tutt'oggi irrinunciabili sono Mommsen (1843) e soprattutto Waltzing (1895-1900), ma indispensabili aggiornamenti possono essere ricercati in De Robertis (1971), Royden (1988), Clemente (1991), van Nijf (1997) e, soprattutto, Tran (2006); per una sintesi aggiornata, si veda anche Diosono (2007). E' dedicato al fenomeno nell'area dell'Egeo il volume di Kloppenborg & Ascough (2011), all'Asia Minore e alla costa settentrionale del Mar Nero la monografia di Harland (2014); per una raccolta di documenti commentati, cfr. anche Ascough e. a. (2012).

¹⁴ Plut. *Numa* 17; Plin. *N.H.* 35.159 (Numa); Flor. 1.6.3 (Servio Tullio); la percezione che i *collegia* fossero istituzioni antiche ed autorevoli emerge comunque in modo evidente.

¹⁵ Waltzing (1895-1900), I, 33-59 distinse *collegia* religiosi, politici, professionali, funerari, militari e coinvolti nell'impiego statale.

collegiati un rilievo sociale alternativo alle magistrature municipali, così come un'utilità più immediata, di tipo economico, quantomeno all'interno delle associazioni professionali¹⁶. Organizzati sul modello delle istituzioni pubbliche¹⁷ e, talvolta, sulle gerarchie dell'esercito, i *collegia* si erano dotati di propri magistrati, eletti attraverso il voto dei singoli membri (si trattava frequentemente di *magistri* e *magistri quinquennales*)¹⁸. Un complesso sistema di *honores* permetteva inoltre di creare un vero e proprio gruppo dirigente anche al di fuori delle magistrature ordinarie, attraverso la designazione di *magistri perpetui*, *honorati*, *patroni*, che contribuivano all'amministrazione e alle finanze dell'associazione¹⁹. Ogni collegio era inoltre titolare di una cassa comune, aveva propri schiavi e dipendenti, proprietà e concessioni. Quando possedevano una sede, questa era ispirata ai dettami dell'architettura pubblica, o alle residenze delle classi dirigenti. Le *scholae*²⁰ segnavano il paesaggio urbano e rappresentavano plasticamente le ambizioni ed il respiro pubblico di organizzazioni in tutto e per tutto private²¹. Il solido ordinamento dei *collegia*, nonché la loro capacità di aggregare e coordinare l'attività di singoli individui, era fatalmente destinata a diventare un valore per l'amministrazione imperiale, soprattutto nella fornitura di servizi essenziali, all'interno di un panorama istituzionale estremamente semplificato. Questa straordinaria capacità di aggregazione e coordinamento suscitava del resto i sospetti dell'autorità politica. Nel contesto della Roma tardo-repubblicana Clodio, da tribuno, si era servito dei *collegia* per imporre la propria

¹⁶ Sulla partecipazione ai *collegia*, come strumento di promozione sociale, si vedano van Nijf (1997) e Tran (2006); per un'introduzione al dibattito sul ruolo dei *collegia* nel mondo antico si veda Verboven (2011); nello stesso volume di *Ancient Society* (41 [2011]), si veda il contributo di W. Brokaert, che ha privilegiato un'analisi dei guadagni materiali dei *collegiati*.

¹⁷ Dig. 3.4.1.1: *proprium est ad exemplum rei publicae habere res communes*.

¹⁸ Per una disamina degli onori e delle magistrature collegiali, si vedano Waltzing (1895-1900), I, sopr. 385-406; Royden (1988); Tran (2006) sopr. 139-174.

¹⁹ Il *collegium* raccoglieva denaro attraverso quote associative, lasciti testamentari e donazioni, spesso funzionali all'elezione ad una delle magistrature, anche onorarie, dell'associazione. Gli aspetti finanziari rientravano nelle competenze del *quaestor*. Più di altri incarichi, la questura del collegio derivava chiaramente dalle magistrature cittadine, che costituivano evidentemente il più valido (e prossimo) modello istituzionale per i *collegia* — così Royden (1988) sopr. 12-18.

²⁰ Così è comunemente definito il luogo deputato allo svolgimento delle pratiche collegiali, ma sono attestati anche i termini *curia*, *domus*, *locus*, *basilica*, *templum*, *aedes*, *aedicula*. Sulle sedi di *collegia* a Roma, si veda Bollmann (1997); dedicato alle sedi degli *Augustales*, Calabrò (2005); per una panoramica in area italica, si vedano Patterson (1994); Bollmann (1998).

²¹ Su questo, resta essenziale van Nijf (1997) sopr. 137-138, 149-239.

agenda politica²² e, dei rischi tradizionalmente ad essi associati, si ha traccia nella ricorrente legislazione dedicata a limitarne il fenomeno²³, almeno fino ad età traianea, come suggerito dal noto scambio epistolare di Plinio con l'imperatore, in merito alla costituzione di un collegio di *fabri* a Nicomedia²⁴. Uno dei più noti fra questi provvedimenti restrittivi, la *lex Iulia de collegiis* ordinava la chiusura immediata di tutti i *collegia* costituitisi senza la necessaria autorizzazione del Senato, ad eccezione delle associazioni "antiche e legittime", riferibili ad un passato di cui si riconosceva l'autorevolezza²⁵. Fra queste organizzazioni, come suggerisce la tradizionale creazione regia di due *centuriae fabrum*²⁶, figuravano probabilmente i *fabri* stessi, coloro cioè che lavoravano manualmente diversi tipi di materiali²⁷, soprattutto nei settori delle costruzioni, della cantieristica navale, ma anche della falegnameria²⁸. All'interno della documentazione, in larga misura epigrafica, relativa all'associazionismo nel mondo romano, i *collegia fabrum* — nelle loro diverse specializzazioni professionali — sono senza dubbio ben attestati²⁹. Senz'altro, la ricchezza potenziale dei membri del *collegium* era determinante per questa maggiore visibilità: la sede collegiale ed il tempio loro attribuiti ad Ostia dimostrano bene quanto una ricca associazione potesse incidere sul panorama urbano di una città tanto

²² Per una disamina del programma politico di Clodio e del suo rapporto con i *collegia*, si veda Tatum (1999) sopr. 25-26 e 117-119.

²³ Il dibattito su questi provvedimenti è ampio: per alcuni recenti contributi (con bibliografia), si vedano Cotter (1996); Arnaoutoglou (2002); Harland (2003) sopr. 161-173; Liu (2005). Sui disordini ai quali i *collegia* erano frequentemente associati, si veda van Nijf (1997) 234-239.

²⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 10.33-34. Traiano rammentava a Plinio che *provinciam istam et praecipue eas civitates eius modi factionibus esse vexatas. Quodcumque nomen ex quacumque causa dederimus iis, qui in idem contracti fuerint, hetaeriae eaeque brevi fient*. Altre ragioni rendono questo scambio epistolare molto noto: nella sua lettera, Plinio proponeva la costituzione di un collegio di 150 *fabri* perché intervenissero in caso di incendi in città.

²⁵ *LPR* 442-443; Suet. *Aug.* 32: *plurimae factiones titulo collegi novi ad nullius non facinoris societatem coibant. (...) (scil. Augustus) collegia praeter antiqua et legitima dissolvit*.

²⁶ Liv. 1.43.1.

²⁷ *TLL* 'Faber', 8: "quilibet artifex qui materiem duram (velut metalla ligna lapides ebur) tractat".

²⁸ Nonostante l'antica origine e la riconosciuta importanza, anche le associazioni dei *fabri* furono danneggiate dai provvedimenti degli ultimi decenni della Repubblica, se — come suggerisce il conto per lustrì dalla loro data di fondazione — i *fabri tignarii* furono costituiti (nuovamente?), in Roma, nel 7 a.C. (*CIL* VI 10299) — su questo, si veda Panciera (1981) 271-273; Royden (1988) 25-27; Liu (2009) 51.

²⁹ Waltzing (1895-1900), III, 149-152.

importante³⁰. La struttura sociale del collegio era costituita da una *plebs*, il corpo sociale propriamente detto, spesso suddivisa in *decuriae* o *centuriae*, unità (forse anche di voto) guidate da decurioni o centurioni. I *magistri quinquennales* (spesso in numero di due o tre³¹), erano a capo dell'associazione e la rappresentavano pubblicamente. All'interno di alcune realtà locali, i *fabri* erano spesso associati a *centonarii* e *dendrophori*, secondo una formula epigraficamente ben attestata, nei *tria splendidissima collegia*³². Le tre associazioni celebravano patroni comuni e insieme comparivano all'atto delle dediche, ma non rinunciavano tuttavia alla propria autonomia finanziaria e organizzativa, così come all'elezione dei rispettivi magistrati: questi "consorzi" non sono dunque rappresentativi di una struttura propriamente unitaria. Singolarmente, a questi *collegia* sono frequentemente riconducibili alcuni magistrati dalla titolatura particolare: *praefecti collegii fabrum* (e/o *centonariorum*)³³. Si tratta di un *corpus* relativamente

³⁰ Si fa qui riferimento al Caseggiato dei Triclini (I, XII, 1), sontuosa struttura elevata letteralmente a pochi passi dal Foro, e al Tempio Collegiale (V, XI, 1); su questo si veda Bollmann (1998) 285-286 e 342-345 (con bibliografia).

³¹ Come per quanto generalmente riguarda la struttura dei *collegia*, non c'erano vincoli precisi: a Roma, il collegio dei *fabri tignarii* (di 1300 membri) contava sei *magistri quinquennales* — Panciera (1981) 272-273 e (1996) 249; Royden (1981) 127-136.

³² Su questo, si vedano Waltzing (1895-1900), II, 193-208 e, per approcci più recenti, Diosono (2007) 56-67 e Liu (2009) 50-55, in cui è correttamente messa in discussione l'effettiva prossimità di associazioni obiettivamente molto distanti fra loro. Dei *fabri* si è fin qui dato conto; i *centonarii* erano produttori e commercianti di tessuti e vestiti, mentre i *dendrophori* erano costituiti in un collegio di tipo eminentemente religioso (anche se non privo di aspetti economici), devoto al culto della *Magna Mater* e di *Attis*; sui *centonarii*, si veda Liu (2009), sui *dendrophori* e, più in generale, sul culto ad essi collegato nel bacino mediterraneo, Vermaseren (1977-1989).

³³ Tutte le seguenti iscrizioni menzionano i *praefecti collegii fabrum* (laddove presente, l'indicazione dei *centonarii* è stata citata). Da Ostia: CIL XIV 298; XIV 303 = 4620 = ILS 1431 = AE 1913, 191; AE 1955, 169; da Ameria: CIL XI 4404; da Aquileia: CIL V 749 = ILS 4873; BRUSIN (1991), I, 308 nr. 675; da Aquincum: CIL III 3438 = ILS 7254; AE 1934, 118; AE 1937, 202; CIL III 10475; da Augusta Treverorum: CIL XIII 11313 = AE 1908, 132 = ILS 9418; da Concordia: CIL V 8667; AE 1995, 586 = 2008, 568 — *p[r]aefectus coll[egii] fab[rum] et cent[onariorum]*; da Carnuntum: CIL III 4496 = 11096 = AE 1966, 285; da Dyrrachium: CIL III 611 = ILS 7188; da Parentium: CIL V 335 = ILS 6678 = INSCRIT X.2 16; da Pola: CIL V 60 = INSCRIT X.1 88; da Salona: CIL III 2026 = ILS 7162; CIL III 2087; AE 1922, 39 — *praefectus bis coll[egii] fab[rum] et cent[onariorum]*; ILJUG 678 — *praefectus coll[egii] fab[rum] et cent[onariorum]*; da Siscia: CIL III 10836 — *praefectus coll[egii] cent[onariorum]*; da Sarmizegetusa: CIL III 1398; CIL III 1495 = ILS 7135; AE 1933, 247; 2003, 1514; 2006, 1163; da Savaria: AE 1965, 294 — *pr(a)efectus coll[egiorum] fab[rum] cent[onariorum]*; 1990, 803 = 1995, 1240 = 2000, 1190 = 2011, 964 (?); da Vindobona: CIL III 4557. Proviene infine da Emona l'iscrizione di un *patr[onus] coll[egii] dendrofo[rum] et praefectus et patronus coll[egii] cent[onariorum]* (CIL III 10738).

cospicuo (31 iscrizioni³⁴), tutte riferibili a personaggi eminenti di quelle stesse comunità, cavalieri, spesso decurioni, duoviri. M. Cerva aveva notato come prevalentemente si trattasse di documenti di II-III sec. d.C., pertinenti all'area adriatico-danubiana³⁵. Lo storico italiano aveva spiegato questa circostanza con ragioni strategiche: i prefetti del collegio dei *fabri* erano “comandanti supremi, di probabile nomina esterna, che affiancavano, per esigenze eminentemente operative, i funzionari incaricati della gestione amministrativa delle associazioni”³⁶. In sintesi, si trattava di una ricostruzione derivata dalla tesi di Hirschfeld: per ragioni strategiche, a tutela di strutture essenziali (come i cantieri navali e i granaia) dal rischio di incendi, ai *fabri* sarebbe stato assegnato un prefetto come supervisore. Su queste argomentazioni faceva già perno il ragionamento di Maué: ritengo tuttavia che si tratti di uno sforzo di sovrainterpretazione.

Innanzitutto, la prefettura *collegii* non è attestata solo per i *fabri*: si è detto che essa era stata adottata anche da *centonarii* e *dendrophori* e Waltzing aveva già segnalato altri prefetti collegiali al di fuori dei *fabri*³⁷. L'incarico stesso di prefetto non sembra avere alcun rapporto con il mondo militare³⁸: esso presupponeva semplicemente una nomina, probabilmente, in caso le magistrature ordinarie del collegio non riuscissero a far fronte a specifiche esigenze. Anche la tesi secondo cui l'ordinamento dei *fabri*

³⁴ Questo numero non comprende le rare attestazioni di prefetti dei *dendrophori*: CIL XIV 2634 = ILS 6210, da *Tusculum*; CIL V 424*, dalla provincia dell'attuale Verona — falsa, secondo Mommsen, l'iscrizione è stata riconosciuta come autentica da S. Panciera (1970); CIL XI 6* = CCID 456 da *Ravenna* — *praefectus colleg(ii) dendr(ophorum) et centonar(iorum)*.

³⁵ Cerva (2000) 192-193 sopr. n. 30, per una disamina relativa ai *praefecti collegii fabrum*; lo storico italiano non ha comunque mancato di citare le due iscrizioni da *Ostia* (di pieno I sec. d.C.) e l'iscrizione da *Ameria*. Cerva ha citato anche due iscrizioni di problematica attribuzione. La prima da *Poetovio*, pubblicata in Bratanič (1951) 9-10, fa sì menzione di una prefettura, ma, posta *d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*, deve forse essere intesa come non strettamente collegata ai *collegia*; la seconda, CIL III 12589 (da *Sarmizegetusa*), pur se riconducibile al collegio dei *fabri*, è conservata in stato troppo frammentario. Sulle attestazioni dei *praefecti collegii fabrum* nella *Regio X*, si veda anche Salamito (1990); per la *Pannonia*, Gallego Franco (1997).

³⁶ Cerva (2000) 192.

³⁷ Waltzing (1895-1900), IV, 417-418 aveva segnalato — fra gli altri — prefetti dei *collegia iuventutis*, dei *nautae* del Rodano, dei *negotiatores Cisalpini et Transalpini*, degli *Augustales*, associazioni che nulla avevano a che fare con servizi o strutture militari o paramilitari.

³⁸ La varietà di significati e ambiti operativi è nota e del resto ben chiara ad una banale disamina di TLL X.2 fasc. IV: 'Praefectura' 605-609; 'Praefectus' sub 'Praeficio' 623-631.

fosse di tipo paramilitare non è del tutto priva di contraddizioni, dalla presenza di centurioni, decurioni e prefetti (che, come si è detto, non costituivano un'esclusiva di questo solo collegio) alla suddivisione in decurie e centurie, anch'essa tutt'altro che riservata ai *fabri*³⁹. Come si è visto, la struttura dei singoli *collegia* si ispirava — con un certo grado di libertà — alle istituzioni cittadine ma, trattandosi di incarichi relativi ad associazioni private, essi non dovevano rispondere a specifici obblighi di legge. Soffermendosi sui *collegia*, in relazione all'attività politica di P. Clodio Pulcro, W.J. Tatum ha suggerito che larga parte dell'associazionismo romano avesse trovato nell'esercito la più prestigiosa (ed efficiente) organizzazione su cui modellare la propria stessa struttura⁴⁰. In questo caso, l'esercito avrebbe costituito essenzialmente un riferimento a cui ispirarsi⁴¹. Alcune notissime iscrizioni ostiensi, in cui la *plebs collegii dei fabri tignarii* sembra definita *numerus caligatorum* (una definizione indiscutibilmente militare⁴²), potrebbero confermare questa tendenza⁴³. Le argomentazioni di Tatum mi sembrano suggerire prudenza: i riferimenti alla struttura dell'esercito non dimostrano affatto un impegno operativo di tipo paramilitare, quanto piuttosto una diversa sensibilità di associazioni e *collegiati*. Non è questa la sede per mettere in discussione l'attribuzione di funzioni anti-incendio ai *fabri*⁴⁴; ci sono tuttavia sufficienti elementi per

³⁹ Di nuovo, Waltzing (1895-1900), IV, 417-418 segnalava come una suddivisione in *centuriae* o *decuriae* fosse attestata per vari *collegia*, al di là dei *fabri*.

⁴⁰ Tatum (1999) 25-26 e 259 n. 136.

⁴¹ A proposito della *praefectura collegii*, Goffaux (2008) 50-51 aveva suggerito potesse essere collegata alla “militarizzazione” delle associazioni, riscontrabile in questo stesso periodo — cfr. Tran (2006) 301-302. Questo fenomeno non comportava del resto alcun inquadramento nell'esercito stesso. L'attrazione culturale esercitata dal mondo militare doveva essere tanto più forte per i *fabri*, in virtù della già accennata creazione di due centurie di *fabri*, tradizionalmente associata all'esercito centuriato serviano (Liv. 1.43.3). Ciò detto, categorizzazioni troppo nette sono senz'altro rischiose, soprattutto considerato lo stretto legame fra cittadinanza romana e servizio militare. L'esercito era un mondo di cittadini — in essere (nelle legioni) o in divenire (nei corpi ausiliari).

⁴² Iuv. Sat. 16.24; Suet. Aug. 25; Iustin. 74.4.3; Dig. 3.2.2 e 29.1.43, in cui l'espressione *in numero esse* è intesa come “essere arruolati”. CIL VIII 2848, XI 3057 e XIV 2288 fanno esplicito riferimento all'ambiente militare. Si veda infine Le Bohec (1992) 41.

⁴³ Si tratta infatti di un *corpus* di sole quattro iscrizioni, tre pertinenti all'età di Settimio Severo (CIL XIV 160 = ILS 1428; CIL XIV 374 = ILS 6165; CIL XIV 4569 = AE 1928, 123; CIL XIV 419 = 4668), mentre una — della stessa epoca — fu rilavorata dallo stesso *numerus*, in età diocleziana (CIL XIV 128 = ILS 615). E' dunque ragionevole supporre che il favore dimostrato all'esercito da questi imperatori potesse costituire lo stimolo necessario alla coniazione di questa stessa formula.

⁴⁴ Si tratta di una linea di ricerca già convincentemente sostenuta per i *centonarii* da Liu (2009) sopr. 125-160. Mi limiterò a due punti critici, che, a fronte della chiara testimonianza

supporre che la nomina dei prefetti collegiali (un incarico che, come si è detto, trovava confronti soprattutto nelle magistrature cittadine) non avesse necessariamente un rapporto con questa specifica attività. Il fatto che l'incarico sia ben attestato in un tempo e in un'area geografica limitati — le province adriatico-danubiane fra II e III sec. d.C., come già segnalato da M. Cerva⁴⁵ — sembra invece suggerire che questa soluzione possa essere stata frutto di un fenomeno di emulazione reciproca fra diverse associazioni e comunità, verosimilmente ispirate dalle realtà di Roma e Ostia, dalla cui area infatti proviene il materiale più antico. Lungi dall'essere una posizione istituzionale, la prefettura *collegii fabrum* era dunque un semplice incarico collegiale: è probabile che i prefetti fossero scelti dai *collegiati* (o dai loro dirigenti), così come del resto avveniva per altre figure apicali del sodalizio, come i *magistri perpetui* e i *patroni*⁴⁶. A ben vedere, la possibilità che, nel corso del II secolo, supervisori ufficiali fossero inviati nelle realtà locali dall'autorità centrale per prendere parte (o sovrintendere) alla gestione di associazioni private, mi pare una forzatura⁴⁷. Resta a questo punto inevaso il problema sollevato dalle iscrizioni di Papiriano, che in effetti sembrano chiamare in causa questo incarico e quello di *praefectus fabrum*.

pliniana, richiedono comunque un approfondimento. Entro la fine del I sec. d.C., Roma ed Ostia erano formalmente dotate di *vigiles*: è dunque necessario definire quale fosse la funzione pubblica dei *fabri* in queste due città. In secondo luogo, sarebbe opportuno definire quanto davvero potessero essere impiegati in un'attività tanto pericolosa individui privi di adeguata preparazione tecnica.

⁴⁵ Per un elenco dei documenti epigrafici, si veda *supra* n. 33; cfr. anche Cerva (2000) 192-193 n. 30.

⁴⁶ Questo è senz'altro documentato per *Sex. Octavius Sex. f. Pal. Felicianus* da *Tusculum* — *ob honorem oblatum sibi praefectur(ae) a collegio dendroforum* (CIL XIV 2634 = ILS 6210) — su questo caso, si veda Goffaux (2008). Alle stesse conclusioni, ma limitandosi ad una disamina dei vari *praefecti collegii* attestati, è giunta Liu (2009) 155-157, che forse eccede nel ritenere si trattasse solo di un incarico onorario — per questo non mi pare ci siano elementi sufficienti. *Contra* Salamito (1990) 166, che sosteneva che la nomina del *praefectus collegii* ricadesse sulle magistrature cittadine: non troppo distante dalla tesi di O. Hirschfeld, la studiosa riteneva infatti che il prefetto collegiale fosse posto a capo delle associazioni impegnate nel servizio anti-incendio.

⁴⁷ Dello stesso avviso è Tran (2006) 303-304. Diverso è il caso della gestione di processi complessi, ai quali le istituzioni municipali prendevano parte e per i quali erano nominati appositi ufficiali, sovente dalla stessa autorità imperiale: gli *alimenta*, ad esempio, avevano determinato la necessità di appositi funzionari locali, scelti dall'alto, i *quaestores alimentorum*. L'istituzione alimentare costituisce in effetti un confronto significativo: istituto di pubblica utilità, da una parte testimonia la stretta relazione funzionale, ormai stabilitasi in epoca traianea, fra potere imperiale e istituzioni locali, dall'altra dimostra che tale rapporto presupponeva una partecipazione di soggetti propriamente pubblici e non di associazioni private — su questo si veda Eck (1999) 151-194 e sopr. 168-169.

Quanto alla prefettura dei *fabri*, essa era innanzitutto un incarico istituzionale, concesso per nomina diretta di un magistrato *cum imperio*. Una breve disamina delle sue attestazioni in età repubblicana permette di escludere che essa fosse concessa necessariamente ad un *eques*⁴⁸, mentre un rapporto fiduciario fra magistrato e prefetto sembra essere stato un elemento essenziale dell'incarico⁴⁹.

Durante i primi due secoli dell'Impero, la prefettura fu ricoperta da individui ambiziosi, cavalieri e non, spesso *domi nobiles*, attratti dal prestigio (e forse dai guadagni) di una posizione rivestita al di fuori della normale carriera locale. I dati relativi all'età repubblicana⁵⁰ indicano un vasto ambito operativo ed un notevole prestigio, goduto all'interno del *consilium* del magistrato, il cui *imperium*, come recentemente ribadito, comprendeva indistintamente competenze civili e militari⁵¹. Al di là di un'origine forse molto antica⁵², alla fine della Repubblica essa era un incarico di notevole rilievo e politicamente riconosciuto⁵³, il cui contatto con i *collegia* pare tuttavia del tutto inconsistente. Nella *lex Ursonensis* — un documento di I secolo d. C., ma il cui testo sembra pertinente ad età cesariana⁵⁴ —, il prefetto dei *fabri* del governatore è trattato alla stregua di un membro della classe dirigente locale e, come i senatori, i cavalieri ed i loro figli, aveva dunque un posto privilegiato durante gli spettacoli teatrali. Questo beneficio discendeva dalla funzione e non dallo *status* personale del prefetto. Il *praefectus fabrum* della *lex Ursonensis* era il rappresentante del proconsole e così del governo provinciale nel suo complesso. Con queste premesse, il carattere istituzionale dell'incarico non poteva essere

⁴⁸ Dei sedici casi trattati da Welch (1995), soltanto tre erano senz'altro cavalieri (vi. *L. Cornelius Balbus*; xiv. *P. Volumnius Eutrapelus*; xvi. *C. Cornelius Gallus*), mentre l'appartenenza di due al rango equestre è alquanto incerta (viii. *C. Velleius*; ix. *L. Clodius* — numerazione romana tratta dall'articolo di Welch). In modo un poco sorprendente, le conclusioni a quel contributo consideravano comunque come un dato di fatto lo *status* equestre dei prefetti (*ibid.* 144-145).

⁴⁹ Welch (1995) 144.

⁵⁰ Su questo, si veda la raccolta di Welch (1995), con le importanti correzioni di Badian (1997).

⁵¹ E' questa la tesi recentemente sostenuta da Drogula (2015). Sull'*imperium*, i suoi limiti e le sue prerogative, si vedano i recenti lavori di Dalla Rosa (2014) e Vervaeke (2014).

⁵² Cerva (2000) 177-178, in cui è comunque raccomandata opportuna prudenza fra l'associazione di prefettura dei *fabri* e *centuriae fabrum* serviane, a cui si è fatto cenno.

⁵³ Welch (1995) 140 descrive la prefettura di *Vibullius Rufus* (xi.) per Pompeo come "official recognition" (così, anche per il nr. xiii., *Theophanes* — *ibid.* 142).

⁵⁴ Per l'edizione della *lex coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*, si veda Crawford (1996) I nr. 25 — cfr. sopr. 414, c. 127.

frainteso con la pur prestigiosa presidenza di un'associazione, quali che fossero destinate ad essere le competenze dei prefetti, nel corso del II sec. d.C, quando ormai, ad avviso di Dobson, l'incarico aveva perso larga parte della propria operatività.

Sembra infine opportuno soffermarsi sulla distinzione fra prefettura militare e "municipale" (o comunque civile), in qualche modo attribuita a Dobson⁵⁵. Le conseguenze del suo approccio sono state infatti notevoli: da una parte, la disamina della prefettura è stata — anche recentemente — condotta ipotizzando l'esistenza di almeno due categorie di prefetti⁵⁶, dall'altra, si sono confermati i presupposti per una sovrapposizione fra prefettura dei *fabri* e strutture cittadine e/o collegiali⁵⁷.

In effetti, non è possibile distinguere alcun elemento che giustifichi una tale sovrapposizione fra l'età repubblicana⁵⁸ e l'età imperiale: pur cambiando nel tempo l'operatività dell'incarico (il fulcro delle argomentazioni di Dobson), non era mutata la natura istituzionale dello stesso. La prefettura dei *fabri*, contrariamente a quella di carattere "ibrido" (pubblico e privato) del collegio dei *fabri*, restava un incarico istituzionale nell'amministrazione dell'Impero. E' fin troppo ovvio che, in un contesto profondamente modificato ed in presenza di altri e più remunerativi incarichi, emersi durante i primi due secoli dell'Impero, cambiasse invece l'importanza relativa della prefettura all'interno dell'ordinamento contemporaneo e nelle prospettive che essa poteva aprire a coloro che la raggiungevano⁵⁹. Questo non escludeva la possibilità che l'incarico potesse essere

⁵⁵ Uno dei principali assunti formulati da Dobson (1966) 62 era appunto che qualsiasi dibattito a proposito di prefettura dei *fabri* dovesse specificare a che tipo di prefetti si riferisse effettivamente, con ciò insistendo sull'esistenza di prefetti dal *cursus* militare (ed effettivo) e prefetti dalla carriera "civile" (soprattutto municipale, un incarico in tal caso pressoché onorario, a partire dall'epoca successiva a Claudio). Si trattava di una prospettiva antica, già alla base della tesi di Maué — che intendeva così giustificare il *cursus* municipale di numerosi prefetti di I sec. d.C. In verità, Dobson non distingueva due categorie tanto nette ed era ovviamente ben consapevole che la decisione di concentrarsi sui soli prefetti "militari" di età giulio-claudia fosse prima di tutto una scelta personale — cioè di carattere arbitrario.

⁵⁶ Fra i più recenti contributi con questo approccio, si vedano: Riel (1997) 74; Cerva (2000); Rizakis (2003); Gonzáles Herrero (2004); Zucca (2004); Frei-Stolba (2005); Bitner (2015).

⁵⁷ Così in Bitner (2015) sopr. 177.

⁵⁸ Un'analisi del materiale repubblicano, permette di escludere ogni confusione fra prefettura e *collegia*. Del resto, lo stesso Maué si era ben guardato dal sostenere la propria tesi per quest'epoca.

⁵⁹ Altri incarichi, come il tribunato militare *a populo* in età augustea — per il quale è ancora essenziale lo studio di Nicolet (1967) —, il rango di *beneficiarius* — su questo,

inteso in modo puramente formale, ma non ne metteva in discussione il carattere istituzionale⁶⁰. Servirsi del *cursus* dei prefetti attestati per tracciare la storia di due diverse prefetture mi sembra dunque una scelta di metodo errata ed in ogni caso infruttuosa: l'incarico era uno, quale che fosse l'effettività con cui era rivestito.

L'esame delle epigrafi — che rappresentano la quasi totalità del materiale disponibile sulla *praefectura fabrum* dopo l'avvento del Principato — merita invece un approccio d'insieme⁶¹. Una rapida disamina del *corpus* permette di escludere anche su base epigrafica una sovrapposizione fra prefettura dei *fabri* e *collegia fabrum*. Il rapporto stesso con i *collegia* è discutibile, limitato soprattutto al collegio religioso degli *Augustales*⁶². Soltanto due epigrafi contengono un riferimento alla prefettura dei *fabri* ed al collegio dei *fabri*.

La prima è un'iscrizione onoraria dedicata in età flavia a M. Antonio Severo, figlio di Marco, della tribù *Menenia*⁶³. Il *cursus* di Marco merita attenzione. L'iscrizione è stata rinvenuta a *Portus*, ma gli incarichi municipali qualificano il personaggio come ostiense. Prefetto dei *fabri*, *duumvir*, *quaestor aerarii*, *quaestor alimentorum*, *flamen divi Vespasiani* e, in

Nelis-Clément (2000) — e quelli di *praeco* e *apparitor* costituirono valide alternative per integrare nuovi elementi all'interno dell'amministrazione imperiale. Significativamente, in uno studio relativamente poco citato dagli specialisti di prefettura dei *fabri*, Purcell (1983) aveva individuato nella *praefectura fabrum* un incarico ideale con cui confrontare l'ascesa degli *apparitores* durante l'età imperiale.

⁶⁰ Già in età repubblicana, era del resto probabile che la *praefectura fabrum* potesse essere rivestita senza sostenerne gli oneri. Questa era la proposta di Badian (1997) 16-17, che riconosceva un significativo confronto con il caso di Attico, che aveva accettato da consoli e pretori prefetture ed incarichi, a condizione che fossero esercitabili dalla propria stessa dimora (Nep. *Att.* 6.4). Queste nomine potevano essere operativamente fittizie, ma non perdevano per questo un carattere ufficiale ed istituzionale. Badian suggeriva a ragione un confronto con il tribunato militare, non meno istituzionale e, talvolta, "fittizio" (Cic. *Fam.* 7.8.1) e si spingeva ad immaginare che questo fenomeno fosse legato ad un qualche tipo di compenso. In questo, incideva la definizione ben attestata in epigrafia di *praefectus fabrum delatus a consule/consulibus*, che aveva attratto l'attenzione di Liebenam (*Diz. Ep.* 'Fabri' 17); più recentemente si è interessata al tema Frei-Stolba (2005) sopr. 305-313.

⁶¹ Si tratta di un *corpus* di oltre 500 iscrizioni, forse relative a circa 460 distinti individui, per più della metà provenienti dall'Italia e dalla stessa città di Roma.

⁶² Si tratta di appena tredici casi e, come è ovvio, l'attinenza con i *fabri* è nulla: *CIL* IX 1648 = *ILS* 6499; *CIL* IX 2128; *CIL* X 3909; *CIL* X 5922; *CIL* XI 6117; *CIL* XI 3798 = *ILS* 6581; *CIL* XIV 3665 = *ILS* 6236 = *INSCRIT* IV.1 193; *AE* 1972, 148; *AE* 1953, 56; *AE* 1980, 489; *AE* 1969/1970, 165.

⁶³ *CIL* XIV 298: *M(arco) Antonio / M(arci) f(ilio) Men(enia) / Severo / praefecto fabr(um) / Hvir(o) quaest(ori) aer(arii) / quaestori alim(entorum) / fl[am](ini) div[i] Vesp(asiani) / praef(ecto) fabr(um) ti[gn](uariorum)] Ostiensium.*

chiusura, *praefectus fabrum Ostiensium*⁶⁴. In questa iscrizione è già chiara la distinzione esistente fra la prefettura di collegio e la prefettura dei *fabri*, entrambe citate e non assimilate⁶⁵. Colpisce semmai la posizione delle due, rispettivamente agli estremi della carriera. Se dunque la prefettura dei *fabri* è citata a parte, all'inizio dell'iscrizione e subito prima del *cursus* locale (presentato in ordine discendente), la prefettura del collegio è collocata in chiusura, anch'essa in qualche modo isolata, perché estranea agli incarichi istituzionali locali. Come già notato da Sablayrolles per la *Narbonensis* la prefettura (e in questo caso potremmo dire le prefetture) era(no) presentata/e al di fuori della carriera locale, perché ad essa estranea/e⁶⁶.

Una seconda iscrizione, rinvenuta a Tivoli, scolpita su di un basamento marmoreo, è la dedica curata dal collegio dei *fabri* di *Tibur* per *Q. Hortensius Faustinus*, figlio di Quinto, della tribù *Collina*, *advocatus fisci*, *praefectus fabrum*, *patronus municipii*⁶⁷. L'iscrizione, datata al 172 d.C., precisamente al 13 di maggio, riporta anche i nomi dei curatori del *collegium*: *M. Helvius Exspectatus* e *C. Allianus Tiburtinus*. Si trattava senza dubbio dei *magistri* del *collegium*, ai quali era stata affidata la curatela della dedica⁶⁸, non altrimenti attestati⁶⁹. In questo caso, la prefettura dei *fabri* compare fra un incarico extra-locale ed un riconoscimento onorifico da parte del municipio. La dedica, eseguita *ob merita* e con il permesso dei decurioni, non precisa se Faustino fosse patrono del collegio, né se fosse effettivamente un cittadino di Tivoli, ma è chiaro

⁶⁴ Per la questura *alimentorum*, si veda *supra* n. 47.

⁶⁵ Liebenam (1922) 14, che distingueva i due incarichi, pur trattandoli all'interno della stessa voce, citava proprio questa iscrizione e quelle di Papiriano, per esemplificarne la distanza. Un poco sorprendentemente, Cerva (2000) 191 e n. 25 ha sostenuto che la citazione di questo documento non sarebbe del tutto pertinente, "perché la prefettura che succede agli *honores municipales* è quella del *collegium fabrum*, avvalorando l'identità di prefettura dei *fabri* dopo le magistrature e prefettura di collegio").

⁶⁶ Sablayrolles (1984) sopr. 245-247.

⁶⁷ CIL XIV 3643 = ILS 6235 = *INSCRIT* IV.1 149: *Q(uito) Hortensio / Q(uiti) f(ilio) Col(lina) / Faustino / advocato fis/ci praefecto fabrum / patrono municipi(i) / collegium fabrum / Tiburtium ob / merita / l(oco) d(ato) s(enatus) c(onsulto)*; sul lato sin.: *Curantibus / M(arco) Helvio Exspectato et / C(aio) Alliano Tiburtino*; sul lato des.: *Curantibus / C(aio) Alliano Tiburtino et / M(arco) Helvio Ex(s)pectato / dedicata / III Id(us) Mai(as) Maximo et Orfito co(n)s(ulibus)*.

⁶⁸ Si tratta di una dinamica assolutamente usuale all'interno del collegio dei *fabri* — Royden (1988) 28.

⁶⁹ In effetti, il fatto che non siano altrimenti attestati indurrebbe a credere che la loro importanza fosse principalmente limitata all'associazione stessa, un fatto non nuovo per questo tipo di dirigenti — Tran (2006) sopr. 81-88.

che, compresa fra il patronato della città e la posizione al *fiscus*, la *prae-fectura fabrum* figure nuovamente come un incarico istituzionale, ben distinta da una magistratura collegiale.

Ho sin qui volutamente escluso le due iscrizioni di Papiriano, ma mi pare evidente che, sia per ragioni di carattere istituzionale e amministrativo, che a seguito di uno spoglio del materiale epigrafico disponibile, non vi siano elementi per sostenere una sovrapposizione fra la prefettura dei *fabri* e i *collegia fabrum*: nei due soli casi attestati in cui compaiano entrambe, una tale confusione è chiaramente evitata, fin nell'ordine di presentazione degli incarichi. Infine, il fatto che un *prae-fectus fabrum* abbia svolto la propria carriera essenzialmente all'interno di un *municipium* non autorizza a ritenere che quell'incarico fosse parte del *cursus* municipale o, ancora, avesse connotazione civile. Si tornerà su questo punto, soprattutto perché alla base della convinzione di due distinte prefetture: una di carattere militare, l'altra civile.

Come si è detto, l'interpretazione delle iscrizioni con *L. Varius Papirius Papirianus*, consentiva a Dobson di affermare che si trattasse di “an example of the title *prae-fectus fabrum* being used, coupled with the post at Rome, *praef. fabrum Romae et Tergeste*”⁷⁰. Non credo che queste iscrizioni possano essere derubricate con facilità, fin tanto almeno che la loro interpretazione non si discosti da quella formulata da Th. Mommsen. Il pilastro della sua tesi era che Papiriano avesse ricoperto una prefettura dei *fabri* a seguito di uno dei consoli o dei pretori — *Romae* — e fosse stato successivamente nominato come prefetto del collegio dei *fabri* a Tergeste⁷¹. In questa forma, tuttavia, la lettura di Mommsen sottintenderebbe che, nella mentalità del tempo, i due incarichi potessero essere confusi (e per ben due volte, in diverse iscrizioni)⁷². Sarebbe questo un fatto rilevante, soprattutto in età adrianea, un periodo in cui la *prae-fectura fabrum* è ancora ben attestata⁷³. Se, come si è sin qui sostenuto, *collegia* e prefettura dei *fabri* erano incarichi ben diversi e non sovrapponibili,

⁷⁰ Dobson (1966) 67.

⁷¹ Come anticipato, la tesi di Mommsen ha avuto grande fortuna, tanto da non essere messa in discussione dallo stesso Cerva (2000).

⁷² In questo senso, non ritengo si possa accogliere la considerazione di Bloch (1903) 121, che, di fronte a quello che sembrava uno dei migliori argomenti di Maué, commentava laconicamente: “l'inscription est donc rédigée d'une façon sommaire et quelque peu incorrecte”.

⁷³ Almeno 56 iscrizioni (48 individui) sono con buona sicurezza riferibili alla sola prima metà del II sec. d.C. .

anche il caso di un singolo individuo è allora significativo. Ritengo che almeno tre soluzioni siano disponibili e debbano essere qui considerate.

Una prima possibilità è che, da quest'epoca, i due incarichi potessero effettivamente essere confusi, ciò che Dobson aveva implicitamente considerato come un dato di fatto. In questo caso però si dovrebbe concludere che le iscrizioni menzionanti i prefetti dei *collegia* dei *fabri* — e pertinenti ad epoca successiva all'età adrianea — con la loro caratteristica diffusione geografica, dessero ancora conto di una distinzione ormai perduta. Non ci sono elementi per ritenere che un incarico, la cui nomina era tanto strettamente connessa alle magistrature *cum imperio*, potesse subire un cambiamento tanto profondo della propria natura. Per quanto la prefettura potesse essere decaduta funzionalmente, come dimostrato dall'attribuzione a bambini o adolescenti, essa rimaneva un veicolo importante per istituire un vincolo formale (?) con un magistrato di rango pretorio o consolare, comunque un membro della classe dirigente urbana⁷⁴.

Una seconda ipotesi — mai discussa — è che la prefettura dei *fabri* a cui Papiriano faceva riferimento fosse la prefettura dei *collegia* di Roma e *Tergeste*. La *praefectura fabrum Romae* (senza la menzione di alcun magistrato o dello stesso imperatore) è attestata in un numero relativamente scarso di iscrizioni, comprese fra i regni di Claudio e Adriano. All'interno di questo *corpus*, non c'è tuttavia alcun riferimento ai *collegia* e tutte le iscrizioni sono state intese — ritengo correttamente — come pertinenti ad una prefettura istituzionale, a seguito di un console o di un pretore, a Roma⁷⁵. A questo riguardo, sono tuttavia convinto che interpretare *Romae* come una formula abbreviata, per sottintendere il magistrato con cui i prefetti avevano prestato servizio, sia forse un po' troppo semplicistico. Precisare che si era servito a Roma poteva anzi rappresentare un elemento di distinzione — indifferentemente dal magistrato col quale si era operato — tanto più a seguito della progressiva decadenza della prefettura stessa.

Con quella peculiare formula epigrafica, Papiriano avrebbe anzi potuto dare conto dei contesti in cui aveva svolto la propria attività di *praefectus fabrum*. Come si è detto, la possibilità che la prefettura dei *fabri* non

⁷⁴ Esempi di prefetti giovani (o giovanissimi) sono: *CIL* III 646; VI 3512 = *InscrIt* IV.1 155; IX 223; 2646; *AE* 1953, 56.

⁷⁵ Per questa interpretazione e per un regesto di queste occorrenze, si veda Frei-Stolba (2005) 308-309. Non sappiamo per quanto tempo i prefetti dovessero trattenerli a Roma, ma se Badian (1997) 16 aveva ragione, perché ricevessero un riconoscimento economico dall'erario, senza dubbio dovevano recarvisi.

comportasse necessariamente un servizio effettivo, lontano dalla propria città di residenza, era forse un'antica convenzione. Senza dubbio, è anche per questo che gran parte dei prefetti dei *fabri* attestati epigraficamente non precisava i propri compiti o il contesto in cui aveva operato. Tuttavia, è anche vero che, soprattutto nei primi due secoli dell'Impero, alcuni individui menzionarono i magistrati per cui avevano prestato servizio e altri segnalano Roma come teatro operativo qualificante del loro stesso incarico⁷⁶. Non si può dunque escludere che, nel limitato spazio offerto da un'iscrizione, questi dettagli potessero essere considerati come un elemento politicamente e socialmente significativo, tanto più che, fin dall'età repubblicana, la prefettura era stata caratterizzata da una notevole libertà di movimento e azione⁷⁷. I prefetti non erano dunque tenuti a trattenersi a Roma, o al seguito del rispettivo magistrato; talvolta, segnalavano nelle proprie iscrizioni gli ambiti operativi in cui avevano effettivamente operato.

Tutto considerato, mi sembra che l'interpretazione più probabile e rispettosa delle antiche consuetudini, sia appunto che Papiriano — un uomo che, all'interno della propria comunità, aveva rivestito le magistrature più importanti ed era inoltre patrono del collegio dei *fabri* — potesse vantare che il proprio incarico fosse stato rivestito sia a Roma che a Tergeste (in uno o due momenti diversi) — pur senza precisare il tenore (e l'effettività) delle sue mansioni. Per quanto nessun'altra iscrizione contenga la segnalazione di due distinti ambiti territoriali, altri avevano già specificato il luogo in cui avevano svolto le proprie funzioni e, forse, per Papiriano, l'esperienza da prefetto dei *fabri* in una città di cui era (o sarebbe stato) *duoviro*, non era stata una semplice sinecura, ma un'esperienza — amministrativa e politica — da vantare nell'occasione di almeno due dediche. Cogliere le ragioni che hanno spinto uomini tanto lontani

⁷⁶ Si è già detto dei *praefecti fabrum Romae* (vedi *supra* n. 75); si vedano anche CIL 5392, 5393 = ILS 6286 e 5394 (*sortiendis iudicibus in Asia*); XIV 3665 = ILS 6236 = *INSCRIT* IV 1, 193 (*Carthaginis*); OGIS 494 = ILS 8860 (*sortiendis iudicibus in Asia*); AE 1952, 225 = 2010, 1472 (*p. f. et frumenti mancipalis provinciae Africae*); AE 1983, 626 (*in Germania*).

⁷⁷ Per l'età repubblicana, i *praefecti fabrum* sembrano svolgere funzioni di comando e rappresentanza, anche a distanza dal proprio magistrato (i. *T. Turpilius Silanus*; vi. *L. Cornelius Balbus*; ix. *L. Clodius*; xi. *Vibullius Rufus*; xii. *Numerius Magius*; xiii. *Cn. Pompeius Theophanes*; xvi. *C. Cornelius Gallus*). Su questo, si vedano Welch (1995); Badian (1997). Del resto, questa relativa libertà (anche di movimento) doveva essere alla base del principio legale, che consentiva di ricoprire l'incarico in modo del tutto formale, dalla propria stessa dimora.

dalla contemporaneità a scegliere le parole con cui essere ricordati è senz'altro un procedimento rischioso⁷⁸, ma certo questa terza ipotesi permette almeno di garantire che un individuo insignito della prefettura dei *fabri* da un magistrato *cum imperio* sapesse ben distinguere fra un incarico propriamente istituzionale ed il pur prestigioso ruolo di dirigente di un'associazione professionale cittadina. Come si è visto, questa distinzione emerge chiaramente da una disamina della documentazione disponibile: le magistrature dei *collegia fabrum* e la *praefectura fabrum* non erano assimilabili. Prefetti dei *fabri* e prefetti dei *collegia* appartenevano talvolta alla medesima dimensione sociale — ai *domi nobiles*, o agli stessi cavalieri — ma, quando è documentata, una relazione fra prefetti dei *fabri* e *collegia* si configura sempre come un elemento personale del *cursus* e non assume carattere sistematico.

Come si è detto, era soprattutto la nomina da parte di un magistrato *cum imperio* a caratterizzare la *praefectura fabrum* e a conferirle prestigio e appetibilità. Nel II sec. d.C., la sua operatività si era certo ridimensionata, ma questa relazione con eminenti personalità dell'élite urbana poteva ancora dimostrarsi significativa: un riconoscimento importante per elementi del notabilato soddissfatti del solo impegno nelle magistrature cittadine e uno strumento di promozione (più o meno efficace) per coloro che ambissero ad una carriera nelle istituzioni e nell'amministrazione imperiali.

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⁷⁸ Ad una disamina delle problematiche relative ai *cursus* iscritti e al ruolo dell'individuo oggetto di *honores* (e dediche) nella definizione degli incarichi all'interno delle iscrizioni onorarie, ha dedicato numerosi contributi W. Eck — qui si segnalano Eck (1995); (2005); (2009).

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AFRICAN AND OSTIAN CONNECTIONS: THE CASE-STUDY OF LUCIUS CAECILIUS AEMILIANUS

Abstract: The Roman Empire was characterised by increased mobility. Improved infrastructure, trade links, and Roman citizenship enabled people to move around the Mediterranean and settle in a new place. The harbour city of Ostia, with its vast movement of people and goods, was emblematic of this phenomenon of mobility and connectivity. People from all over the Roman Empire, including many from the Roman North African provinces, lived and worked here. Evidence for this is especially visible in the Piazzale delle Corporazioni with its many *stationes* relating to African cities such as Carthage. This article will explore these connections between Africa and Ostia by studying an inscription erected by an African veteran and *duovir*, Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus, who dedicated this inscription while he was living and working in Ostia. In this inscription, he displayed an interesting combination of both his African military past and his Ostian commercial present career as he was a member of the *corpus splendidissimum importatorum et negotiantium vinariorum*. This article will examine this combination of facets of identity and also the reasons why Caecilius chose to display his identity in this way.

Increased mobility was one of the characteristics of the Roman Empire. An improved infrastructure, trade links, and Roman citizenship enabled people to move around the Mediterranean and settle in a new place. Scheidel states that this human mobility was “a direct function of empire-building and a defining feature of Roman identity”.¹ The harbour city of Ostia, with its vast movement of people and goods, was emblematic of this phenomenon of mobility and connectivity. The city was a melting-pot of cultures, with people from all over the Roman Empire living and working here. Some of these individuals would have only stayed in Ostia for a limited period of time, for example, labourers who only worked during the sailing season or soldiers, but there were also many people from across the empire who came to Ostia and settled, worked, and died in this city.² Africans were among the people who lived here and Meiggs has argued that it was actually with Africa that Ostia had the closest connections as a result of the grain imports.³ Already in 60 BC, Pompey had set up a regular grain supply from Africa to Rome, and other products such as oil and

¹ Scheidel (2004) 1.

² Aldrete (2004) 213.

³ Meiggs (1973) 214.

fish-sauce had arrived sporadically from Africa to Ostia in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. However, the 1st and 2nd centuries AD saw a boom in the production of agricultural goods in Roman North Africa and, as a result, there was also an increase in the exportation of these goods to Rome via Ostia.⁴ The geographical distance between Africa and Ostia was but a short trip away by boat as Pliny points out that it was possible for a ship to travel between Africa and Ostia in two days.⁵ This trade continued throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and grew even stronger despite the political upheavals of the time. The connections between Africa and Ostia are especially clear in the *Piazzale delle Corporazioni* which was dominated by traders from African towns who had their offices here, as can be seen from the various mosaics decorating the Piazzale stations.⁶

Many inscriptions were dedicated in Ostia by people connected with the African trade. This article will examine the establishment of identity which took place when an individual came to Ostia, and the display thereof, via an inscription erected in Ostia by Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus. It will be argued here that this inscription is a remarkable display of identity which reflects the multifaceted nature of identities in antiquity. It will be necessary first to establish Aemilianus' past identity in order to understand its display in the inscription here. This article will argue that this inscription shows a unique display of identity but that it is also emblematic of Ostia as an international society where migration and immigration were commonplace. This article will first examine Aemilianus' background and where he came from. This will then be followed by an examination of the history of viticulture in Africa, and lastly it will be looked at why this display of identity was so important for Aemilianus in Ostia. The main questions this article explores are: How are Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus' identities expressed in this inscription? Why did he choose to express these identities in Ostia? How did wine trade connect Ostia to Roman North Africa?

LUCIUS CAECILIUS AEMILIANUS

The inscription by Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus states that he was a veteran of the first praetorian cohort, *decurio*, and *duovir* in Africa:

⁴ Martin e.a. (2002) 276, 277-278. African goods were not only exported to Rome of course.

⁵ Pliny *HN* 19.1.4.

⁶ Martin e.a. (2002) 278.

L(ucius) Caecilius / Aemilianus / veteranus ex coh(orte) / pr(ima) prae-
toria decu(r)io duovir Aeliae / Uluzibbirae Africae / corporatus in tem(plo)
fori vinari(i) inpor(tatorum negotian(tium) fecit sibi⁷

No date has been given for the inscription but it will be argued here that it was dated to the 2nd century AD. The inscription was not found *in situ*, but is currently placed rather haphazardly just off the *Via dei Molini*, north-east of the *Caseggiato dei Molini*. This inscription clearly states that after Aemilianus' period in Africa he enjoyed a commercial career in Ostia where he was a member of the *corpus splendidissimum importatorum et negotiantium vinariorum*. The members of this guild were involved in the import and sale of wine, especially in bulk.⁸ Purcell states that the *vinarii* were mainly a phenomenon of the second century AD, especially during the late Antonine period.⁹ An increased demand for wine, resulting from urban expansion, could be an explanation for this as well as the possibility to import greater quantities of wine due to increased production in the provinces. Purcell also states that members of the guild to which Aemilianus belonged were of high standing in Ostia, as is shown by the use of *splendidissimum* in the tile, and that, as such, they were comparable to a "commercial aristocracy".¹⁰

The combination of the three facets of identity here, namely the expression of both a past military and civic career as well as a present commercial identity, are rare. It will be argued here that the reason for this combination was because these identities were highly interconnected and that Aemilianus' past career aided him in his Ostian commercial occupation. The inscription is very clear in that it describes Aemilianus' past military and civil careers, and also places him within Ostian society by stating his membership of the Ostian *collegium*. Despite this high level of specificity, Aemilianus does not actually give a place of origin. The *nomen* and *cognomen* of Caecilius Aemilianus were commonly used both in Africa and Ostia so this does not give a clear indication of where he might be from.¹¹ However, it is possible to state with reasonable certainty that Aemilianus came from Africa because of recruitment patterns of soldiers here, praetorian enlistment requirements, and also his political career in Africa.

⁷ AE 1940, 64: "Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus, veteran of the first praetorian cohort, decurion, duumvir in Aelia Uluzibbira in Africa, (member of the) guild of importers and traders in the temple in the Forum Vinarium, erected this for himself".

⁸ Meiggs (1973) 275.

⁹ Purcell (1985) 12.

¹⁰ Purcell (1985) 12.

¹¹ Salomies (2002) 41.

The city of Aelia Uluzibbira, mentioned in the inscription, was in Africa Proconsularis, about twenty kilometres north-east of Hadrumetum.¹² Hadrumetum was a Punic city though little evidence of Aelia Uluzibbira remains, but it has been argued that it was founded as a military colony under Hadrian. The Roman conquest of Africa was a slow and gradual process. The original province of Africa had been created in 146 BC after the defeat of Carthage and the subsuming of its lands by Rome.¹³ After this, the region became strongly urbanised and colonies were founded and populated with veterans and Italians.¹⁴ This process truly commenced after the civil wars of the 1st century BC as there apparently had been little interest in Africa until the last decades of the Republic when the North African King Juba I had sided with Pompey in the civil wars. It is generally argued that Roman interest in North Africa only grew after Pompey's defeat and the annexation of Juba's territory.¹⁵ The only legion to be stationed permanently in the African provinces was the *legio III Augusta*. It is not known exactly when this legion was founded but it has been suggested by Le Bohec that the legion originally formed part of Lepidus' army but that Augustus granted them the honour of his name as the result of some service which they had performed sometime between 27 and 19 BC.¹⁶ It is also not known when the legion was transferred to Africa. However, as the *legio* participated in the African Wars of 6 BC to AD 9, this can be taken as a *terminus ante quem*.¹⁷ While Proconsularis is sometimes thought to have been a demilitarised zone, a continuous military presence at the marble quarries of Chemtou shows that this was not the case.¹⁸ Periodic reinforcements of local garrisons show that there was some form of unrest throughout the imperial period.¹⁹ During the Hadrianic

¹² Alternative names for the city are Henchir Zembra, Ulusipari, Ulixibera, Unizibira, and Ulisippira.

¹³ Sears (2011) 31.

¹⁴ Sears (2011) 32, 34.

¹⁵ Hobson (2015) 35 states that there was a minimal amount of Roman action in Africa for about a century after 146 BC. However, he does challenge the view that there was no Roman interest in the province and states that settlement already took place in the Republican period: Hobson (2015) 49, Brun (2004) 185; this led to the creation of the province of Africa Nova and added vast lands to be settled to the Roman Empire.

¹⁶ Le Bohec (1989) 337.

¹⁷ Le Bohec (2000) 373.

¹⁸ Sears (2011) 31: the Roman conquest of Africa was a slow and gradual process. The original province of Africa had been created in 146 BC after the Carthaginian defeat. Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 174-175. There was also an urban cohort in Carthage.

¹⁹ Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 175-176.

period there were numerous revolts here but also a vast expansion of territory which led to the eventual Roman control of most of the north of the African continent.²⁰

Aemilianus states in his inscription that he was a member of the First Praetorian cohort and not that he was a veteran of the Third Augustan Legion. The praetorians were meant for the personal use of the emperor and they served in various roles, amongst others as imperial bodyguards and firefighters as well as by providing security at the games and handling prisoners.²¹ For the majority of the Roman Imperial period there were nine praetorian cohorts.²² These praetorians were men of free birth and it became customary to recruit men on an individual basis, rather than *en masse*, during the reign of Augustus.²³ These men were mainly of an Italian origin at this time and remained so until well into the Severan period. However, men from the provinces are known to have served as praetorians.²⁴ Aemilianus would, therefore, have had to have been a Roman citizen and, based on recruitment patterns and military traditions in North Africa, it is likely that he came from a military family. Being born into a military family would explain how he had gained his citizenship, especially as the fact that he held two civic posts in Africa after this service as a praetorian suggests that this was his place of origin (see below). It is possible that Aemilianus' father was a North African based upon the proposed date for the inscription and also recruitment patterns of the Third Augustan legion which changed considerably over time and have been studied extensively by Mann.²⁵ The headquarters of the Third Augustan

²⁰ See Le Bohec (1989) 335-365 for a full overview of military actions.

²¹ Bingham (2013) 18: the official Roman *vigiles*, firefighters, were not professionally organised before AD 6.

²² Bingham (2013) 15. There were nine praetorian cohorts and three urban cohorts in Rome during the Augustan period: Tac. *Ann.* 4.5.3. This number was raised to sixteen by Vitellius but reduced to nine again upon Vespasian's ascent to the imperial throne: *ILS* 1993; Bingham (2013) 37. The number of cohorts remained at nine until the time of Constantine who added another cohort bringing the number of Praetorian cohorts to ten: Bingham (2013) 37.

²³ Bingham (2013) 56. This custom might have its origins in the recruitment of the first praetorians who were veterans of Octavian and Anthony's cohorts.

²⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 4.5.3; Cass. Dio 56.23.4; Bingham (2013) 56. Dio lists men from Gaul and Germania while there is also evidence for people from Gallia Narbonensis, Spain, and Macedonia serving as praetorians in the 1st century AD.

²⁵ Le Bohec (2000) 378; Mattingly (1987) 8. The Italian origins can be surmised from the fact that the legion was first attested under Lepidus: Le Bohec (1989) 337. Collar (2011) 228 who argues that the Officers would have mainly been of a non-local and, thus, non-African origin.

legion moved three times during its period in Africa; during the Julio-Claudian period it was at Ammaedara and at this time Italians dominated the membership lists.²⁶ However, epigraphic evidence shows that once the legion was settled in here, local recruitment developed with soldiers generally being enrolled from the colonies and other settlements in the northern part of the province.²⁷

Under Vespasian the legion moved to Theveste and the settlement at Ammaedara was turned into a veteran colony called *colonia Flavia Augusta Emerita Ammaedara*.²⁸ At this point there is still evidence for a non-African origin for at least some of the legionaries as some men came from Gallia Comata and Germania. Mann suggests that these men came from the Rhine legions which were disbanded by Vespasian and whose men were redistributed among the other provincial legions.²⁹ Further provincials are also attested as a *vexillatio* of the legion was sent to participate in the Parthian Wars. Local recruitment of soldiers took place at this time, probably in order to replace deceased soldiers.³⁰ Thus, while there were many non-African soldiers in this legion during this period, it is important to note that they now predominantly came from the other provinces and no longer from Italy. However, the main body of soldiers for the legion already came from the North African veteran colonies and *canabae*.³¹

The legion's final move was to Lambaesis, which occurred no later than AD 98. At this point local recruitment greatly increased and legionaries of a non-African origin rarely occur in the epigraphic record anymore, something which is shown especially via dedicatory inscriptions which were set up by veterans and included their place of origin.³² An inscription, dated to the middle of the 2nd century, only includes African recruits who mainly came from the Julian, Flavian, and Trajanic veteran colonies in Africa Proconsularis.³³ Italian recruits do not occur in these lists at all anymore. These membership lists show that colonies had become the main source of recruitment for the legion from this time onwards and also

²⁶ Mann (1983) 12.

²⁷ Mann (1983) 12.

²⁸ *CIL* VIII 308. No inscriptions from here mention veterans.

²⁹ Mann (1983) 13.

³⁰ *CIL* VIII 18084; Mann (1983) 13.

³¹ Mann (1983) 14.

³² See, for example, *CIL* VIII 2586 which is dated to AD 216.

³³ *CIL* VIII 1687.

that a tradition had developed which promoted the children of soldiers entering into the legion themselves.³⁴ As praetorians were always Roman citizens it is possible that Aemilianus himself came from a military family as Roman citizenship was granted to soldiers upon their retirement from the legion which was then passed on to their legal children. It became common in North Africa for the children of veterans to also pursue a military career. This would have made it likely that Aemilianus would also have joined the army and his father's military past could have also provided him with necessary connections which could have facilitated his entry into the Praetorian Guard. As a second-century AD date is proposed for this inscription, it is likely that Aemilianus' father was of an African origin, based upon recruitment patterns, and that Aemilianus, thus, also came from North Africa. This is backed up by the fact that Aemilianus returned to Aelia Uluzibbira after his period of service in Rome, and held the posts of *duovir* and *decurio*. Bingham notes that retired praetorians could take an active part in civic life in their place of origin after their period of service. In fact, she states, that while some praetorians did stay on in Rome, the majority returned to their place of origin which suggests that Aemilianus originally came from Aelia Uluzibbira.³⁵

Aemilianus' African origin is important as his inscription was not erected in Africa but in Ostia.³⁶ It is aimed at an Ostian audience and Aemilianus must have had a reason for including these specific details about his past in Africa. The display of identity here, therefore, had a precise meaning for Aemilianus. He was not the only official from Africa who held a commercial post in Ostia as Publius Aufidius Fortis, who had been a *duovir* in Hippo Regis, is also known as being a *duovir*, *decurio* and *quaestor aerarii Ostiensium*. However, he only mentions a civil and not a military past.³⁷ Something which set Aemilianus apart in Africa as well as in Ostia is the fact that he was both a soldier and a civic official. In fact, Mann lists only nine inscriptions from Africa which mention a veteran also serving in civilian position, mainly as either a *duovir*

³⁴ Mann (1983) 16: people mainly joined the army from pre-Hadrianic colonies.

³⁵ Bingham (2013) 58-59. They could also chose to stay on as *evocati Augusti* in Rome.

³⁶ The epigraphic habit of Africa should be taken into account here, as only a few inscriptions erected by traders have been found in the North African provinces. The same phenomenon also occurs in the Spanish provinces: Broekaert (2016) 222.

³⁷ *CIL* XIV 303, 4621.

or a *flamen perpetuus*.³⁸ As he states “The veteran generally did not achieve any great economic or social standing”.³⁹ For at least some of these, for example a soldier who was *decurio*, *duovir* and *flamen perpetuus* in Madaura, they held these positions while they were still serving in the military. For this to have happened, it is likely that these soldiers served as an official in the place they came from. As Aemilianus was a veteran from the First Praetorian cohort he would not have served in Africa but in Rome. Therefore, for him to have held a civic position in Africa, it is likely, based upon the above, that Aemilianus did so in his place of origin, after his period of service in Rome.

Aemilianus seemed to have had a successful civic career in Africa which raises the question why he came to Ostia, though it should be noted that it is not possible to conclude from this inscription whether he settled here permanently or if this was a temporary move. Mann points out that while veterans did possess financial privileges they were not wealthy individuals.⁴⁰ Even in their own communities they would have found few opportunities for economic advancement and there was always the problem of reintegration into society after a long absence. These veterans also did not seem to have had any discernible impact on the local economies of Africa.⁴¹ If there was indeed no chance of financial improvement in his place of origin, it is not unlikely that Aemilianus decided to try his chances in Ostia as the city had well-established connections with Africa. Cebeillac-Gervasoni has noted that there were many Africans who held important positions in Ostia, especially that of procurator of the *Annona*.⁴² She states that of the fifteen known procurators between AD 112 and 211, ten definitely had an African origin.⁴³

³⁸ *CIL* VIII 14697, 4679; *AE* 1921, 21; *AE* 1915, 69; Cagnat 1915, 36; *ILAlg* 2070, 2095, 2201.

³⁹ Mann (1983) 21.

⁴⁰ Mann (1983) 18, 19. He states that veterans would generally have had to settle in their place of origin or where they had been stationed. The rate of pay for praetorians was double that of legionaries.

⁴¹ Cherry (1998) 147: it was probably that only a maximum of one hundred men were discharged every year from Lambaesis.

⁴² Cebeillac-Gervasoni (1996) 564.

⁴³ Cebeillac-Gervasoni (1996) 559. This has led her to conclude that Africans had a monopoly on the grain trade in Ostia and that this in turn led them to control public life and the Ostian economy: p. 564. However, Salomies (2002) 153 argues that while she is right in pointing out the importance of Africans in Ostian society that this argument is “[...] somewhat exaggerated and lacking in subtlety [...]”.

The economy of Africa Proconsularis was especially strong in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD when it received vast revenues from the production of cereals, wine, and oil.⁴⁴ Wine was a commonly produced product in the region of Aelia Uluzibbira, Aemilianus' place of origin, as the soil and weather conditions were good for the cultivation of wine, and most wines from the region were highly valued.⁴⁵ However, African viticulture only developed after the Roman expansion of the province in the 2nd century AD and evidence from shipwrecks shows that Italian wines, especially from Campania, Latium, and Etruria dominated the market from the middle of the 2nd century BC to the Augustan period.⁴⁶ At the end of the Republic, Italian wines were being exported to the Aegean, West Africa, Spain, and Gaul.⁴⁷ However, this changed in the early imperial period, probably as a result of increased migration and mobility as in the 1st century AD vineyards developed in Spain and Gaul to such an extent that people here were no longer dependent on Italian wines and production became prolific enough to start exporting wines.⁴⁸ 181 wine amphorae from the Augustan period were discovered close to Ostia in Longarina, fifty-eight of which came from Spain which indicates that wine was being exported into Rome at this point.⁴⁹ African viticulture also expanded and while Brun can only identify one wine press in Proconsularis, the evidence

⁴⁴ Brun (2004) 199.

⁴⁵ Also the aridity of areas such as Tunisian high steppe and the Libyan Djebel meant that the cultivation of cereals was hard, perhaps making people prefer the farming of other products: Hobson (2015) 99; Redaelli (2013/14) 28.

⁴⁶ Paterson (1982) 152. It should be noted that there is considerable bias in the material recovered from shipwrecks as areas in the south of France have been studied far more extensively than other coastal regions: Rickman (2008) 7. More than 1,500 wrecks have been found dating to between 200 BC and AD 200 which shows the importance of sea trade to the people of the Mediterranean. Shipwrecks from Africa are rare, especially those with a cargo aimed for the Mediterranean market and not the African one: Tortorella (1981) 256. The earliest African shipwrecks can be dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD: Tortorella (1981) 360.

⁴⁷ Tchernia (1986) 125.

⁴⁸ Paterson (1982) 151, 152; Panella & Tchernia (1994) 145: there was also a change in the production and transport of oil. Gaul was a big consumer of wine early on where the product became a status symbol: Posidonius 3.2.6; Tchernia (1983) 92, 94; Tchernia (1986) 91. The production of wine here became more common from the Flavian period onwards where more wine distilleries have been found but these were scarce under Augustus: Tchernia (1986) 146.

⁴⁹ Tchernia (1986) 154; Unwin (2005) 123. Tchernia lists the distribution of amphorae as follows: 4 from Cos, 32 from Baetica, 26 from Tarragona, 42 from north Italy, 50 from Pompeii-Sorrento, 5 from Falernia, 8 Rhodian amphorae, and 14 unallocated Dressel 2-4 amphorae: Tchernia (1986) 154.

for viticulture in Mauretania Caesariensis is plentiful.⁵⁰ He suggests that people in the former province could have fermented the wine in amphorae which were then also used to transport the wine in, instead of using interred *dolia*.⁵¹ Africa was well equipped to transport agricultural exports to Ostia and Rome as there were twenty-nine ports between the provinces of Mauretania Tingitana and Cyrenaica which provided the infrastructure necessary for this trade.⁵² Africa Proconsularis was the best equipped province as it had twenty ports for ships to come and go from, most of which were probably built between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD.⁵³ The export of grain, especially for the *annona*, ensured that an excellent infrastructure was in place from an early date onwards which could then later also serve to transport other products out of Africa, connecting the province with Ostia.⁵⁴ Grain had been produced for the *annona* in Tunisia during the Republican period and there were facilities and a grain fleet in place at Carthage as early as the 3rd century BC.⁵⁵ While the best evidence for African trade comes from Rome and Ostia, the African market was not dependent on these places and it thrived throughout the tumultuous 3rd and 4th centuries AD.⁵⁶ The transport of grain is hard to attest archaeologically but as the liquid products were transported in *dolia* or *amphorae*, they are easier to trace and recover.⁵⁷ There were two main amphora types for African products, Africana I/Africana Piccolo and Africana II/Africana Grande, which were in simultaneous use between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD with

⁵⁰ Brun (2004) 202, 232ff. Hobson (2015) 70-71 states that the evidence for the production of wine is hard to discern from that for the creation of olive oil as both processes required similar equipment. The presence of a mill mortar on site is an indication of the production of olive oil as the equivalent process in the production of wine, namely the treading of grapes, is hard to attest archaeologically. Interpretations of these sites have often leaned towards olive oil over wine as it was long thought that African amphorae were predominantly used to transport oil: Hobson (2015) 71. He also says that there is evidence for a second press in the villa of Hr. Bou Garnin on the shores of Lake Bibèn

⁵¹ Brun (2004) 204; Hobson (2015) 71-72.

⁵² Stone (2014) 566. He mentions that there might be another sixteen possible ports.

⁵³ Stone (2014) 572, 586; Hobson (2015) 146: the Carthaginian port was improved in the 2nd century AD.

⁵⁴ While the best evidence for African trade comes from Rome and Ostia, the African market was not dependent on these places and it thrived throughout the tumultuous 3rd and 4th centuries AD: Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 200. Hobson (2015) 93 states that new evidence from Uchi Maius shows that presses for oil and wine were still in use in the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

⁵⁵ Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 199.

⁵⁶ Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 200.

⁵⁷ Rickman (2008) 9 says that cheap wine was transported mainly in *dolia* and not in *amphorae*.

no product-specific usage.⁵⁸ The production of North African wine coincided with the increase in demand and consumption of wine in an urban context and Purcell suggests that the free distribution of wine, the *crustum et mulsum*, actually increased the people's appetite.⁵⁹ He also notes that periods of rapid urban expansion, such as that which occurred in Ostia in the 2nd century AD, promoted a drinking culture.⁶⁰

Aemilianus imported wine into Ostia and it is likely that he had met other traders and producers of wine while he was working in Africa Proconsularis. In this way, his past in Africa would have aided his career in Ostia, which is why he made sure to stress both aspects in this inscription; he utilised established contacts to facilitate the importation of goods. Literary sources from the 1st century BC already make clear that vast wealth was tied to landownership in Africa.⁶¹ Colossal farms existed in Roman North Africa which were owned by only a few individuals and then farmed by locals.⁶² This mass landownership continued into the imperial period.⁶³ Aemilianus would, therefore, have only needed to come into contact with a few landowners in Africa in order to have been able to import large quantities of wine into Ostia. As a magistrate it is possible that he might have even owned vineyards himself and imported his own goods to Ostia.⁶⁴ The trade and shipping connections with Africa are shown especially in the *Piazzale delle Corporazioni*. The mosaics in the various *stationes* here have numerous depictions of Africa often combined with inscriptions.⁶⁵ For example, a mosaic depicting an amphora with the inscription MC 'M(auretania)

⁵⁸ Mattingly & Hitchner (1995) 200-201: they were probably also produced at the same sites.

⁵⁹ Purcell (1985) 14.

⁶⁰ Purcell (1985) 15. He uses parallels from 19th-century Catalonia to illustrate his point.

⁶¹ Petron. *Sat.* 48; Sen. *Ep.* 89; 114; Pliny *HN* 18.35

⁶² Hobson (2015) 43; Sears (2011) 43; Shaw (1981) 57.

⁶³ See *CIL* VIII 10570.

⁶⁴ See Broekaert (2012) especially pages 112-114, for the discussion of several parallel case-studies for this phenomenon.

⁶⁵ Ostian groups and people from other regions of the empire were also represented here, for example the *naviculari Turritani* from Sardinia (*CIL* XIV 4549.19) but the connections with Africa are shown in the great variety of African cities represented in the mosaics here, for example the *Naviculari Misuenses* (*CIL* XIV 4549.10) and the *Naviculari Gummitani* (*CIL* XIV 4549.17). Apart from the mosaics there is also a dedicatory plaque inscribed with '*Naviculari(i) Africani*' which now hangs on the right hand wall in the Piazzale: *AE* 1955, 183.

C(aesariensis)' is found in *statio* forty-eight.⁶⁶ On the basis of this inscription and mosaic, this *statio* is thought to have belonged to the *Navicularii* from Caesariensis.⁶⁷ The *stationes* illustrate where sailors and traders from several African cities had their bases which formed a social network and bridge for people coming from Africa, who wanted to live and work in Ostia. Traders, such as Aemilianus, had to prove and establish their civic, religious, and social identity when they came to Ostia.⁶⁸ In a society without formal means of identification, identity often had to be established via social networks, especially those connected to one's place of origin. Migration could, thus, be controlled or mediated by institutions, among which the corporations which were present in the *Piazzale*. These could help an individual from a different province establish himself and make connections with local people.⁶⁹ Traders could come from their place of origin and reach out to others from that same geographical area.

Finding trustworthy agents to act on one's behalf was a problem in all pre-modern societies. Because of the distances involved, there was no way of ascertaining whether the products which were being imported were of a suitable quality and it was easy for agents to buy substandard goods or skim off the profits.⁷⁰ Ways of mitigating this problem was by either using friends or family members as agents or, alternatively, by using guilds. It is likely, therefore, that Aemilianus would have utilised existing social networks, which were established during his period in Africa, and would have used people he knew in Africa as agents while he himself was in Ostia. For people seeking to buy products, they could reduce the hazards related to agents by using *collegia* as members of these guilds were pre-screened before being allowed to join and had others to vouch for them. It was in

⁶⁶ *CIL* XIV 4549.48 which can be dated to the end of the 2nd century AD; Lequément (1980) 187, 189, 190.

⁶⁷ This is backed up by evidence from a series of stamps on the handles of amphorae found in the 19th century which came from the city of Tubusuctu, which was abbreviated as 'Tub' or 'Tubus'. These were accompanied by a province or origin as 'P.MC', meaning *ex provincia Mauretania Caesariensis*. See, among others, *AE* 1984, 155 from Rome, *AE* 1975, 865 from Meroe in Egypt, and *CIL* XV 2635.6 also from Rome; Ben Abed-Ben Khader e.a. (1999) 169, 170. It is likely that these mosaics were not all placed here all at once but were done so over a period of time between AD 180 and 200, as a result of new traders coming to Ostia from further places in Africa: Terpstra (2014) 123.

⁶⁸ Broekaert (2011) 228; Moatti (2006) 117. As information was limited it was in the interests of traders to gather together in a single place, here the *Piazzale*, in order to gain as much information from as many sources as possible: Temin (2013) 112.

⁶⁹ Moatti (2006) 119.

⁷⁰ Temin (2013) 98.

the interest of other guild members to ensure correct behaviour on each member's part as bad behaviour on the part of one could reflect poorly upon all of them.⁷¹ The *collegia* then had a multifunctional purpose as the provincials who were already established in Ostia could vouch for a newcomer who wanted to trade with Ostians, and this new trader could, thus, enter Ostian society by being introduced into its civic world.⁷² However, a *collegium* could, then, also be a way of guaranteeing good conduct on a member's part providing security in these ventures. These trade networks were the springboard from which other networks could be created as the shared geographical background of the members provided the trust upon which future trade was based.⁷³ Aemilianus would have utilised these social networks upon his arrival in Ostia. However, it is also possible that he was using his inscription to do precisely this. Aemilianus places a high emphasis on his past in an inscription erected in Ostia and aimed at people in Ostia. In doing so, he is showcasing his past as Roman soldier and also as an official. He is publicly demonstrating his trustworthiness in order to establish his identity in this new place; Aemilianus was using his past as an official in order to lend dependability to his present as a trader and aid him in the establishment of new trade contacts and connections. The addition of his *collegium* membership was yet another way of establishing his credentials and showing his trustworthiness.

On the basis of what has been presented here, it is proposed that the inscription is dated to the 2nd century AD. This was when the greatest expansion in Africa happened and also the time when the production of wine gained in importance and prominence in this province, something which went hand in hand with rapid urban expansion of the 2nd century which increased the demand for wine. The wine *collegia* of Ostia were created and were at their peak during this period. Patterns of recruitment and the foundation of Aelia Uluzibbira in the 2nd century AD also point to this date.

CONCLUSION

Aemilianus' did not randomly display his various careers in his inscription but had a precise reason for the expression of all aspects of his identity.

⁷¹ Temin (2013) 110.

⁷² Broekaert (2011) 228, 231.

⁷³ Terpstra (2014) 123, 124.

It is clear that the military, civilian, and commercial parts were highly connected in his life and that his former careers facilitated the latter. It is important to note the context of the inscription as Aemilianus is expressing his identity in Ostia and is conveying a message to his Ostian audience. It has been argued here that the reason for this was in order to display his credentials so that he could establish his identity and trustworthiness in Ostia, seeing as there was no formal means of establishing identity, and people had to rely on social networks and other people from their place of origin in order to do so. Aemilianus held a civic position in Africa which could lend status to him in Ostia and facilitate the creation of trade networks. The last aspect of this inscription also serves to showcase his current place in society, namely as a member of a prestigious *collegium*, situating Aemilianus in the civic life of Ostia.

Aemilianus' inscription demonstrates how the expansion of empire and increased urbanisation affected individuals as well as the Roman Empire. Ostia was the place where such a man could have settled but also where such an inscription could have been erected. This was a multicultural and international city where people from all across the empire settled. Because of this, it was even more vital than in other places to establish your identity as a result of the masses of people who came to Ostia; the diversity of the city required a clearer demarcation of self. Production of wine only developed in Africa after the further Roman expansions of the 2nd century AD and it was due to the already present infrastructure between Africa and Italy, which was in place for the transportation of grain to Rome, that wine could easily be transported between the provinces, allowing for Aemilianus to make his fortune in Ostia. The established infrastructure facilitated later trade. Aemilianus benefitted personally from these military and civic connections as he used contacts made in Africa to enable his new career as a wine trader in Ostia. The increased mobility and improved infrastructure which were the result of the expansion of the Roman Empire facilitated the exportation of goods to Rome and also made it easier for individuals to move across the Empire and settle in a new region. The inscription erected by Lucius Caecilius Aemilianus, thus, shows the interconnected nature of mobility, expansion, and identity.

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AN EPILEPTIC ARISTIDES? A NEGLECTED ASPECT OF ARISTIDES' RECEPTION

Abstract: Sopater, the fourth-century Greek rhetor and author of the *Aristides Prolegomena*, described Aelius Aristides as an epileptic. This diagnosis is particularly interesting because Sopater was intimately acquainted with Aristides' own autobiographical work — the *Sacred Tales* — which revolved around its author's maladies, the treatments he underwent, and his consultations with physicians, priests, and gods. Aristides himself never used the term 'epileptic' or any of its cognates. What, then, led Sopater to reach such a conclusion and how does it reflect on the reception of Aristides in late antique Athens? This paper will seek to address these questions by considering two aspects of Sopater's diagnosis. The first concerns Sopater's own understanding of the nature of epilepsy. Nearly a millennium after the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* aimed to rebuke the commonly held view that epilepsy was god-sent instead arguing that it had a nature and a cause like all other ailments, it appears that this belief was still steadfast in Sopater's day and age. The second aspect of Sopater's diagnosis to be examined concerns the implications of this understanding of Aristides as an epileptic and its relevance to the *Prolegomena* Sopater offered and to Aristides' reception.

INTRODUCTION

Late antique *Prolegomena* to the works of Aelius Aristides refer to the famous second-century orator as an epileptic.¹ In fact, it ascribed this diagnosis, which might have predated Sopater himself, to common knowledge: ἐπιληπτικὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν λέγουσι γεγονέναι.² It is the first known such diagnosis of Aristides. Whilst the *Prolegomena* discussed predominantly Aristides' style and technique, they also included a biographical section. It is within this history of Aristides' life, that the diagnosis of epilepsy was made. The author of the *Prolegomena*, most likely the Athenian rhetor Sopater,³ states that this medical diagnosis was common knowledge:

¹ I use the text provided by Lenz (1959). References to the Aristides' *Prolegomena* follow, as in Lenz's edition, the page numbers of Dindorf's edition of Aristides' work. Dindorf presents in his edition of Aelius Aristides a text of the *Prolegomena* in the third volume, and after the scholia on Aristides' orations.

² Sopater, *Prolegomena* 738D.

³ Little is known about Sopater's life. Several works concerning rhetoric are ascribed to a Sopater, and are dated to the fourth and fifth centuries CE. There were at least two

Οὗτος δὲ ὁ Ἀριστείδης νέος ὢν πικροτάτην λέγεται νενοσηκέναι νόσον· ἐπιληπτικὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν λέγουσι γεγονέναι, καὶ τὸ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦτο ἠργηκέναι ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον. εἴτα ἀπελθὼν ἐν Περγάνῳ, ὡς δὴ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ πολὺ ἐκεῖσε φοιτῶντος, καὶ παραμείνας χρόνον ἔτυχεν ἰάσεως. καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου ἀμείψασθαι τὴν εὐεργεσίαν βουλόμενος ἔγραψεν ἕξ λόγους τοὺς Ἱεροὺς λεγομένους, ἐν οἷς μόνους τοὺς ὀνειρούς ἐξηγεῖται, οὓς ἰδὼν ἰάθη.⁴

This Aristides, it is said, became severely ill while still young. They say he became epileptic and, due to that, he stopped working on his speeches for some time. Later he came to Pergamum, on the grounds that Asclepius visited there regularly, and remaining there for a period, he attained cure. In regards to this, wishing to repay the beneficence of the god he composed the six books called ‘sacred’, in which he expounded only the dreams, the seeing of which cured him.

The *Prolegomena* were composed for the purpose of training students of rhetoric and they therefore served as a kind of textbook.⁵ In consequence, it can be assumed that all the biographical information that was included in the *Prolegomena* about Aristides was intended to illuminate upon various aspects of his work. In other words, the biographical details offered a means of contextualizing Aristides’ work. Therefore, it must have been believed that his status as an epileptic would have had a bearing upon his rhetorical output. The purpose of this article is to investigate why such a diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic appeared two centuries after he died. I will explore what it says about the reception of Aristides in late antiquity, and what it says about the current thinking surrounding the condition of epilepsy. In the first part of this article I will therefore examine Aristides’ medical history and how Sopater’s diagnosis can be seen in relation to other interpretations of Aristides’ ill health. Next, I will move on to consider understandings of epilepsy within the ancient world. By doing so I will then finally be able to address the central theme of the article, namely the question of why a new diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic emerged at this time.

authors under this name who composed commentaries and prolegomena to earlier works (*Prosopography of Greek Rhetors and Sophists of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2015) s.v. 967). The task of attributing each author with each work is notoriously baffling. Russell (1996) argued for the possibility that the author of the *Prolegomena* was a student of Himerius. Glöckner (1927), in his entry in *RE*, had stated this, and based his claim on an unpublished work of Bruno Keil, but provided no further biographical information.

⁴ Sopater, *Prolegomena* 738D.

⁵ Lenz (1959) ix.

AELIUS ARISTIDES

Aelius Aristides was born in Mysia in Asia Minor, in the year Hadrian succeeded Trajan, into a family of wealth and local political power. Aristides gained the best possible education, excelled in his studies and aspired to the fame and glory a career as a rhetor could offer.⁶ Indeed, he initially appeared to have a promising career in this field, but it was tragically brought to a halt due to severe illness when Aristides was only twenty-six years of age (Aristid. *Or.* 48.5, 60 K).⁷ Aristides was residing in Rome at the time his health failed and he turned to local physicians for help. However, these physicians offered no more than a short-term solution of purging Aristides' body, using therapeutic measures which were both unpleasant and of little use.⁸ In consequence, Aristides decided to abandon his hopes of a future in Rome and returned to Smyrna. During his return journey, and once in Smyrna itself, Aristides continued to consult with various physicians. However, he was offered no cure, prognosis, or even diagnosis (Aristid. *Or.* 48.5-7 K). Aristides then took the only practical advice he was given during this period and travelled to the warm springs near the city of Pergamum for a period of convalescence (Aristid. *Or.* 48.8 K). It was whilst at Pergamum that Asclepius, the god of medicine, first revealed himself to Aristides and invited him to his nearby temple (Aristid. *Or.* 48.7 K).⁹

The period of Aristides' stay in Pergamum coincided with a golden age for the Pergamene Asclepieion.¹⁰ Recently remodelled by Hadrian and enjoying the cultural renaissance of the Greek world in general, and of the city of Pergamum in particular,¹¹ the temple was a magnet for people from throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Scholars like the philosopher Euarestus of Crete, whose acquaintance Aristides had already made while travelling in Egypt, arrived in the Pergamene Asclepieion not as patients,

⁶ For the biography of Aristides see Behr (1994) 1140–1223. For the composition of the *Sacred Tales* Behr (1968) is also paramount. Puech (2002) has collected all the epigraphical evidence relevant to Aristides (138–145). For more general background concerning the role of the Greek sophists in the Roman Empire see Bowersock (1969), with Bowie (1982), and Brunt (1994).

⁷ On the date of the beginning of Aristides' illness see Pernot (1997) 164.

⁸ Aristid. *Or.* 48.63 K.

⁹ For Aristides' illnesses, attitude towards it, and treatment see Israelowich (2012). For his experiences in the Asclepieion see Downie (2013), and Petsalis-Diomidis (2010).

¹⁰ Habicht (1969) 6–8; Hoffmann (1998); Radt (1988).

¹¹ Bowersock (1969) 60ff; Le Glay (1976).

but in pursuit of knowledge of the god.¹² It was not only scholars who visited the temple. In August 146 CE Aristides was fortunate enough to meet the governor Julianus and the civic magnate Rufinus, who were both visiting the Asclepieion while healthy and well, and they offered Aristides some practical help with pending legal issues that troubled him.¹³ Aristides also enjoyed the company of some distinguished scholars who were convalescing in the temple with him at this time. They provided Aristides with valuable support in his decision to follow Asclepius' exhortation and resume the practice of oratory. Men like Salvius, of whom Aristides says that he is now a consul (Σαλβίου τοῦ νῦν ὑπάτου)¹⁴ and Sedatius "one of the Roman senators" (τινι τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ῥωμαίων βουλῆς),¹⁵ provided Aristides with both the moral encouragement and the intellectual stimulus he needed in order to resume declaiming. Whilst visiting the temple Asclepius' worshippers could spend a night of incubation in a purpose-built *abaton*, in expectance of a god-sent dream which included remedies for their ailments.¹⁶ In addition, the city of Pergamum was home to some of the most distinguished physicians of the Graeco-Roman world such as Satyrus and Galen.¹⁷ Indeed, the sick worshippers of Asclepius consulted with local physicians on a regular basis and all the evidence points to the existence of a fruitful synergy between these physicians and the practitioners of temple medicine.¹⁸

Aristides himself believed he benefited immensely from his period in the temple. Asclepius cared for his body and nourished his soul and Aristides was able to resume his career.¹⁹ During his stay in the temple,

¹² Aristid. *Or.* 50.23 K.

¹³ Aristid. *Or.* 50.106-107 K. On this event see Israelowich (2016b).

¹⁴ Aristid. *Or.* 48.9 K.

¹⁵ Aristid. *Or.* 48.48, 50.16 K. L. Sedatius Theophilus was a citizen of Nicaea on the Cayster and Laodiceia ad Lycum and was of praetorian rank. Bowersock (1969) 86-87; Behr (1981-6) *ad loc.*

¹⁶ For treatment see Edelstein and Edelstein (1945) T 404-413; and incubation *ibid.* T 414-442.

¹⁷ Galen was born in Pergamum in 129 CE. Inscriptions connect his father, Nicon, with the development of the city: *IRG* IV 503, 506; Hepding (1933) 90-103, 241-243, p. 100, no. 53. For an overview of his life and work see now Hankinson (2008) 1-33. For Satyrus lecturing in Pergamum: Gal. 10.609; 14.608 K; Aristid. *Or.* 49.8-10 K.

¹⁸ Aristides himself reports of consultation with Satyrus and with an Ephesian physician named Theodotus: Satyrus: Aristid. *Or.* 48.8-10 K; Theodotus: Aristid. *Or.* 47.13, 55, 56; 48.34; 50.21.38.42; 51.57 K.

¹⁹ Aristid. *Or.* 50.17-30 K. Bompaire (1989) 36-39 collects the passages in which Asclepius functions as Aristides' "maître de rhétorique". On the connection between Aristides and Asclepius in the *Sacred Tales* see Pernot (2002).

Aristides was also fortunate enough to consult some of the most notable physicians of his age. These included the above-mentioned Satyrus, one of Galen's teachers, and possibly even Galen himself.²⁰ Galen and Aristides were near contemporaries, belonging in the same social and intellectual milieu, who often resided in the same city.²¹ To the great benefit of modern historians of medicine Aristides documented many of his experiences in the Asclepieion. He recorded his medical condition, his consultations with physicians and gods, and the measures he was prescribed (and followed) whilst obeying Asclepius' explicit commands.²² However, at no point in the *Sacred Tales*, or indeed elsewhere within the Aristidean corpus, is there any mention of epilepsy. Aristides makes no mention of his physicians or Asclepius himself ever suggesting that he was epileptic. This consensus is corroborated by the independent testimony of no other than Galen himself. Galen, who noted that Aristides had a weak body but a strong mind, diagnosed Aristides as consumptive.²³ Hence, although, a later analysis of Aristides' symptoms might have led Sopater or his unnamed source to diagnose him as epileptic, such diagnosis was not made in his lifetime.²⁴

Indeed the discrepancy between Sopater's diagnosis of Aristides and that of the *Sacred Tales* and other contemporary evidence is all the more

²⁰ Aristid. *Or.* 48.8-10 K. Galen's diagnosis of Aristides has been preserved in the Arabic translation of his commentary of Plato's *Timeaus*. See Schröder (1934) 33. But the fact that he was a student in Pergamum at the same time that Aristides convalesced in the Pergamene Asclepieion, and was then sharing at least two mutual acquaintances with Aristides, Galen's testimony has particular relevance to a study of the *Sacred Tales*. The first of these mutual acquaintances was the physician Satyrus who was Galen's teacher and Aristides' doctor (Gal. 2.224; 19.58 K). The second was none other than the Pergamene proconsular L. Cuspius Pactumeius Rufinus, the builder of the exquisite new temple of Zeus-Asclepius in Pergamum. Rufinus was an intimate friend of Aristides and he was also mentioned by Galen (Aristid. *Or.* 50.83-4, 107 K; *PIR*², C 1637). Bowersock thought that "the fact that he [i.e. Galen] was in Pergamum at the same time as Aristides and had at least two acquaintances in common would be enough to prompt speculation that he met the great sophist himself, only twelve years his senior": Bowersock (1969) 61. It is, however, noteworthy that Bowersock provides no proof for such an encounter. His argument, though highly plausible, is circumstantial.

²¹ For a comparative study of the two, in the context of medicine and oratory see the stimulus work of Boudon-Millot (2016).

²² Aristides himself claimed to have composed his *Sacred Tales* for the benefit of those unfortunate enough to suffer from similar ailments to those which he did (*Or.* 48.3 K). Could this be an implicit claim that the *iamata* Asclepius bestowed upon him could be of general use, like a prescription given by a physician?

²³ See Schröder (1934) 33.

²⁴ But see the thought provoking suggestion of Michenaud & Dierkens (1972) 102.

intriguing because we read in Sopater's *Prolegomena* that some unnamed sources claimed that Aristides exchanged knowledge and skills with that epitome of medical authority in classical antiquity, Galen himself:

ἐπειδὴ δὲ τινες λέγουσιν αὐτον ἀνταλλάξαι <καὶ> Γαληνὸν τὴν τέχνην κατὰ χρησμὸν, ἰστέον ὅτι οὐδαμοῦ τούτου μέμνηται, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς καὶ μᾶτην λέγουσιν οἱ τοῦτο λέγοντες.²⁵

Since, however, some say that he exchanged *technē* [sic] with Galen after an oracle. One must know that nowhere is there any mention of this, and that those who say that speak entirely in vain.

Although Sopater rejected these claims, arguing that there is no evidence to support such an assertion (ἰστέον ὅτι οὐδαμοῦ τούτου μέμνηται), this aspect of Aristides' work must have been part of his reception, at least within Sopater's milieu. It is therefore also likely that they recognized that a genuine medical knowledge was at work within his writings (and this was probably especially true for the *Sacred Tales*). If the mere supposition that Aristides shared Galen's medical skills and expertise was ridiculous to Sopater's readership an appeal to the lack of evidence would have also been redundant.

It is noteworthy that despite fierce disagreements revolving around the nature of epilepsy in classical antiquity, its recognition seemed to have been fairly simple.²⁶ Bearing visible symptoms, the epileptic was often diagnosed as such by the people around him, who felt no particular need to wait for the verdict of an expert. Furthermore, the epileptic was seen by society as polluted.²⁷ Spitting at an epileptic appears to have been common practice, not merely for those superstitious people who inhabited Theophrastus' *Characters*, but also during Pliny's time.²⁸ For Plautus the "disease which is spit upon" was used as a reference to epilepsy, which is indicative both of the widespread view that the epileptic was polluted and to the social habit of spitting at him.²⁹ A very similar picture emerges from Apuleius' *Apology*, which was written during Aristides' lifetime and more than three centuries after Plautus.³⁰ There is no evidence that Aristides

²⁵ Sopater, *Prolegomena in Aristid.* 740D.

²⁶ Caelius Aurelianus, *Morb. Chron.* 1.4 par. 70.

²⁷ Apuleius, in his *Apology*, cites an incident where a slave who was held to be epileptic was relegated to a distant farm, so he would not infect the other slaves, Apul. *Apol.* 44; see Israelowich (2016a).

²⁸ Thphr. *Char.* 16; Plin. *HN* 28.35.

²⁹ Pl. *The Capt.* 3.4.550ff.

³⁰ Apul. *Apol.* 43-4.

himself was subjected to such an attitude. Why then, did this new diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic suddenly appear two centuries after he died? In order to make sense of this new diagnosis it is first necessary to look at the understanding of epilepsy in classical antiquity.

EPILEPSY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

In his seminal study of the history of epilepsy from the Greeks to the beginnings of modern neurology Owsei Temkin states that:

Diseases can be considered as acts of invasions by gods, demons, or evil spirits, and treated by the invocation of supposedly supernatural powers. Or they are considered the effects of natural causes, and are consequently treated by natural means. In the struggle between the magic and the scientific conception, the latter has gradually emerged victorious in the western world. The fight has been long and eventful, and in it epilepsy held one of the key positions. Showing both physical and psychic symptoms, epilepsy more than any other disease was open to interpretation both as a physiological process and as the effect of spiritual influences. And whereas certain manic and melancholic reactions, often were, and even are, not recognized as pathological, epilepsy, on the other hand, was always considered as a disease.³¹

This battle between the scientific approach to epilepsy and that of the magicians' can first be seen to have come to prominence in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* from about 400 BCE. This work is not only the first treatise that we know of which was dedicated to epilepsy, it is also one of the most important texts in the history of Greek science and the genealogy of rational thinking. The Hippocratic author of this treatise launches a vigorous attack on various types of health-care providers — magicians, wizards and charlatans (μάγοι τε καὶ καθάρται καὶ ἀγύρται καὶ ἀλαζόνες) — that refer to the disease as “sacred”.³² The argument made in the treatise is also akin to the rest of the Hippocratic corpus where we also normally find somatic explanations for the disease called “sacred”.³³ According to the Hippocratic author of the treatise on the *Sacred Disease*, those health-care providers who characterised the illness as divine did so in order to obscure their ignorance and impotence.³⁴

³¹ Temkin (1971) 3.

³² Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 1.4

³³ *Ibid.* 6.

³⁴ Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 2.

According to the Hippocratic author, this disease, just like any other ailment, has a nature, hence it has a cause (or causes) and can be treated once its nature becomes known and the causes identified: ἀλλὰ φύσιν μὲν ἔχει καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ νοσήματα ὅθεν γινέται, φύσιν δὲ οὕτη καὶ πρόφασιν.³⁵ Epilepsy should therefore be treated with drugs and diet, just like any other disease, rather than by magic.³⁶

However, the somatic approach towards epilepsy that is found both in this work and elsewhere throughout the Hippocratic corpus is evidently a reaction to other views on the subject. These alternative approaches to epilepsy were far less somatic.³⁷ Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence, which suggests the survival of these non-scientific explanations of epilepsy throughout antiquity. Indeed, the differing accounts of the name of the disease itself indicate this continuance. Some maintained that epilepsy was called the “sacred disease” because a deity sent it.³⁸ Others asserted it was named as such because a demon had entered the patient’s body. A third perspective was that the name originated from the inclination of the sick to turn towards the goddess of the moon, Selene.³⁹ Such an understanding of the nature of epilepsy meant that the epileptic often approached religious healers of various sorts.

According to this Hippocratic treatise on the “sacred disease”, and this view is corroborated by various other pieces of evidence, it becomes evident that popular beliefs placed the epileptic under certain interdictions. He was to avoid bathes; certain fishes (for example shall fish, red mullet, blacktail, mullet, and eel); certain meats (such as goat, deer, dog, and pig); birds (cock, turtledove, and bustard); certain vegetables (mint, garlic, and onion); the use of black garments, and goatskins.⁴⁰ Furthermore, according to the Hippocratic author, it was common to treat the

³⁵ Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 1.1.

³⁶ Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 21.

³⁷ The stimulating study of Laskaris (2002) does much to locate this work in its contemporary intellectual and medical environment. After an excellent overview of early healers, the transmission of medical knowledge, and the important subject of religious healing Laskaris emphasises the polemic aspects of this work. Her argument that this treatise “is best understood as a sophistic protreptic speech that was meant to demonstrate its author’s superior understanding and treatment of that disease for the purpose of attracting students and a clientele” (2), provides a good opportunity to note how exceptional this work was in its time of writing.

³⁸ Caelius Aurelianus, *Morb. Chron.* 1.4, par. 60.

³⁹ Caelius Aurelianus, *Morb. Chron.* 1.4, par. 60; Galen’s *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*, p. 29-30.

⁴⁰ Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 4.

so-called “sacred disease” as *miasma*: ὥσπερ μίασμα τι.⁴¹ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it was common for ancient magicians to use incantations and rites of purification to cure epileptics.⁴²

Physicians in Roman times were well aware of various non-scientific remedies for epilepsy, such as drinking the blood of stabbed gladiators or eating a gladiator’s liver.⁴³ Galen himself knew of people who drank tonics made from burned human bones in the attempt to secure a cure for both epilepsy and arthritis.⁴⁴ While these physicians did not prescribe such treatments themselves, they did report that such methods could result in positive outcomes. Some physicians actually approved of consulting magicians and thereby making use of their incantations: *alii vero etiam ligamenta probaverunt, et magos adhibendos, atque eorum incantations*.⁴⁵

It was the Hippocratic authors, notably the author of the *On Sacred Disease*, who were the first to provide somatic explanations of the illness.⁴⁶ In the works of Graeco-Roman physicians, epilepsy was habitually seen as one of the melancholic illnesses, namely it was thought that it was caused by black bile.⁴⁷ It was commonly believed that epilepsy occurred most frequently in the early period of life.⁴⁸ A typical case of epilepsy would begin in childhood and, if it had not been cured or disappeared of its own accord by the time of puberty, its frequency would increase and its symptoms worsen.⁴⁹ Plato also offered a somatic explanation for the disease he too called “sacred”. According to Plato, the most divine part of man’s soul resided in the head. When “white” phlegm mingled with black bile the circulation of the soul was disturbed and the “sacred disease” resulted.⁵⁰ Galen himself found this explanation authoritative. Together with Hippocrates he named Plato as elucidating the causes and nature of epilepsy.⁵¹

⁴¹ Hippoc. *Morb. Sacr.* 12. For the connection between somatic ailments and pollution which was perceived as unnatural see Parker (1983) 207-231.

⁴² Temkin (1971) 21-27.

⁴³ Celsus 3.23.7; Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones* 17.

⁴⁴ Gal. *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*, 11.18 = Gal. 12, 342 K.

⁴⁵ Caelius Aurelianus, *Morb. Chron.* 1.4.

⁴⁶ For the novelty of this explanation within the intellectual climate in which this treatise first appeared see Laskaris (2002).

⁴⁷ Cf. Hippoc. *Epidemics*, 4.8.31; Pl. *Tim.* 85 a-b. Ps. Arist. *Problemata* 30.1.954 b.

⁴⁸ Cf. Paulus of Aegina, ed. Heiberg, III 13; vol. I 152, 27 f; Caelius Aurelianus, *Morb. Chron.* I 4. par. 60. It is therefore noteworthy that Sopater reports that Aristides was epileptic just after he said that he became severely ill when he was young.

⁴⁹ Gal. *In Hippocr. Epid.* VI, comment., V, sect. 5. 26; vol. 17 B, 288 ff.

⁵⁰ Pl. *Tim.* 85a-b.

⁵¹ Gal. *Introductio seu medicus*, c 13; vol. 14, 739.

THE DIAGNOSIS OF ARISTIDES AS AN EPILEPTIC

Building upon both the discussion of the interpretations of Aristides' ill health that was offered in the first section and the survey of the comprehension of epilepsy in the ancient world provided above, the paper will now turn to consider the development of a diagnosis of Aristides as epileptic in late antiquity. One possible explanation for the emergence of such a diagnosis rests on a late re-evaluation of Aristides' symptoms. This explanation originates from Aristides' own description of his ailments as they were recorded in the *Sacred Tales* (and to some extent his other works), as well as their depiction in the works of other authors, such as Galen and Philostratus. Aristides' ailment should be examined in light of the prevailing views of the nature of epilepsy in classical antiquity, in order to consider whether his late antique diagnosis, as an epileptic, could be understood merely as a 'second opinion'. Philostratus, for example, the third-century biographer of the Greek sophists, reported that Aristides had been sick since childhood.⁵² He also reports that Aristides had expounded upon the nature of his illness and had described, in the *Sacred Books*, how it made his tendons shiver.⁵³ As mentioned above, Hippocratic and post Hippocratic diagnosis of epilepsy emphasised its development early in life. With Philostratus' claim that his description of Aristides' health rests upon the testimony of Aristides himself, an emergence of illness during early childhood could have led a late reader to conclude that Aristides was, in fact, epileptic. The *Sacred Tales* themselves include a detailed description of an episode of convulsions and delusions, which Aristides went through in the winter of 165 CE in his Mysian estate during the great plague.⁵⁴

An examination of Aristides' ailments shows that in the period between 144 and 149 CE they were mostly respiratory. Later on, between 166 and 171 CE, he suffered from intestinal problems, and maybe the after effects of smallpox.⁵⁵ Aristides fell ill on his way to Rome in 144 CE, experiencing

⁵² Philostr. *VS* 586.

⁵³ Philostr. *VS* 586. This means that Philostratus read the *Sacred Tales* as an accurate and reliable medical report.

⁵⁴ Aristid. *Or.* 48.39 K.

⁵⁵ Behr (1968) 164-168. Identification of the great plague of 165 CE as smallpox is often found in modern studies; cf. Gilliam (1961; Littman & Littman (1973), and Nutton (2000) 965 who argued in favour, and Birley (2000) 168 who suggested exanthematous typhus and bubonic plague as other options. For a survey on Aristides' ailments, symptoms, and consultations with gods, priests, and physicians see Israelowich (2012) 86-136.

earache and loss of teeth. In addition, he reported not to be able to consume any nutriment but milk and to have suffered shortness of breath and strong fevers (Aristid. *Or.* 48.62 K). While in Rome his intestines swelled, he experienced horrible shivers, but was offered no diagnosis or cure by Roman physicians (Aristid. *Or.* 48.63 K). On his way back Aristides' throat constricted and he underwent fits of shivering, which might have led a later commentator to identify them with epilepsy (Aristid. *Or.* 48.5-7 K). However, when Aristides finally arrived back in Smyrna, and having consulted physicians, as well as other types of health care providers, no one offered this view. In fact, all his carers expressed bewilderment in face of what Aristides described as the complex nature of his illness.⁵⁶ We also know that Aristides kept to a very strict dietary regime, avoiding certain foods, such as all living things (except chicken), sweetmeats, fish, pork, and all greens, except wild ones and lettuce.⁵⁷ Likewise, he avoided baths on numerous occasions.⁵⁸ Later commentators could have interpreted these habits as an indication of epilepsy, as at least some of these abstinences were prescribed to epileptics in the Graeco-Roman world. Moreover, the Pergamene Asclepieion itself was known to have attracted famous Greek epileptics who found cure within the temple. For example the Ephesian physician Rufus gave the case of the historian Teucer whose epilepsy was cured in the Pergamene Asclepeion.⁵⁹

However, as mentioned above, according to all ancient sources, epilepsy was easily diagnosed in classical antiquity even without the help of a physician. It is therefore significant that while alive Aristides was never diagnosed as such to our knowledge. Furthermore, one of the key themes in his *Sacred Tales* was Aristides' disappointment of his physicians' failure to provide him with a diagnosis, prognosis and a cure. In fact, Aristides only turned to Asclepius after his prior attempts to seek cure from physicians had failed. He did so not as an expression of abandonments of medicine, as his continuous consultations with physicians while at the Asclepieion manifest, but as an acceptable corroborative option.⁶⁰ It is

⁵⁶ Τὴν ποικιλίαν τῆς νόσου, Aristid. *Or.* 48. 69 K.

⁵⁷ Aristid. *Or.* 49.34-5 K.

⁵⁸ Aristid. *Or.* 47.15, 26, 29, 40-1, 53, 59 K.D.

⁵⁹ Orib. 4.86. Wilamowitz (1886) argued that this Teucer was a historian and a contemporary of Rufus (122). Temkin (1971) 47, and Habicht (1969) 8, both follow Wilamowitz.

⁶⁰ Müller (1987) has shown the similarities between medical prescriptions and those offered by Asclepius. For a more general discussion see Nutton (1985); Horstmanshoff (2004); as well as Israelowich (2015) chap. 1-2.

unlikely that so many physicians, some of whom were extremely able, would have failed to diagnose an illness, which had such distinctive physical symptoms. In addition, as was mentioned above, it was common during classical antiquity to be in dread of epileptics, to spit on them and to fear their presence. None of these responses can be attested to in the case of Aristides.

A second possible explanation for the emergence of a diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic in late antiquity belongs within the wider context of ancient medicine on the one hand and the changes of his readers' interests during this time on the other hand. It is necessary to consider the relations between somatic explanations of disease and those of the *magoi*, and the influence of this dichotomy — *or its absence* — upon the various explanations of the nature of epilepsy. In addition, the reason for the emergence of this new diagnosis of Aristides cannot be adequately appreciated without considering the circumstances in which it first appears, namely *Prolegomena* to Aristides' literary works, which were composed by a posterior admirer in fast changing culture.⁶¹ The biographical details included within the *Prolegomena* were aimed to allow a better understanding of Aristides' work. The choice of which item of his biography to include alludes strongly to the manner of Aristides' reception in Sopater's world.

The emergence of this tradition of Aristides as epileptic can therefore be examined from an alternative viewpoint, that is to say by asking what one can learn about medicine in general in late antiquity from this allegedly insignificant diagnosis. This new diagnosis of Aristides as suffering from epilepsy poses the questions of medical authority in the world of Sopater, the authority to use medical terms, and the strictness of nosology during his age. The labelling of Aristides, an author who ascribed his professional success to Asclepius, who entitled the period of convalescence in his Pergamene Asclepieion by the unusual term *cathedra*,⁶² and who

⁶¹ Sopater's admiration of Aristides' works was typical of his time and the cultural habitat of fourth century Athens and elsewhere in centres of Greek learning. Cf. Libanius' admiration of Aelius Aristides: Lib. *Ep.* 1534. For a more general discussion of sophists in late antiquity see Kennedy (1983) 104-108, and *passim*. The Christianization of the Roman Empire, and its influence of Greek *paideia* should be remembered, although it extends the scope of this paper.

⁶² Aristides' choice of describing his period in Pergamum with the word *cathedra* is an interesting one (Aristid. *Or.* 48.70, 49.44 K). Although Antyllus and Soranus, two Greek authors writing on medicine who were contemporaries of Aristides, used this term in a medical context (Antyll. *Ap. Orib.* 9.14.6 Antyllus uses this term in a discussion of

claimed the god of medicine trained him as an orator as an epileptic by a later admirer, exemplifies at least some of the implications of the absence of dichotomy between science and religion in the field of medicine.⁶³ Furthermore, it demonstrates the prevalence of local, folk, and superstitious explanations of epilepsy throughout classical antiquity.

A diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic which first appears in a work of a teacher of rhetoric in late fourth-century Athens, rather than in a work of a physician should be taken as an additional indication for the absence of a monopoly of physicians over matters of medicine throughout classical antiquity.⁶⁴ In the Graeco-Roman world those who were seen as competent to help the sick varied from charismatic healers, who cured by a word, a prayer or a healing touch of a hand, through to those with experience in setting fractures or dislocations, to those who could call on the

the medical qualities of beds; Sor. 1.27 Soranus, in his gynaecology, uses this term in reference to menstruation), the term *cathedra* was not used exclusively in medical discourse. In fact, another common usage of this term in the Greek world of the second century was to designate the chair of a teacher or a paid position of a professional scholar, usually in the fields of rhetoric and philosophy (Cf. *SIG* 845 [Eleusis iii CE]). Aristides arrived in Pergamum soon after he was forced to abandon his aspirations of gaining fame and glory as an orator in Rome. In the Asclepieion he resumed his engagement in rhetoric and his pursuit of a career as an orator and writer. The choice of this particular word might suggest that Aristides saw his time in Pergamum as an essential phase in his professional development. Cox Miller argued that "This choice of name suggests that Aristides found his profession — his professing voice — not in spite of his illness that had brought him to Asclepius, but *in it*": Cox Miller (1994) 189. His choice of the word *cathedra* to describe this time spent at the Pergamene Asclepieion might also explain why Aristides attributed his professional success to Asclepius. However, Aristides' description of this period of convalescing in the temple as *cathedra* might have been an implicit message to his readers, which placed his period of convalescing within the context of his career as a rhetor. The publication of the *Sacred Tales* makes a strong case for such an argument. The fact that the *Tales* were written to be publicly read shifts the explanation of their *raison d'être* and meaning. Rather than taking them as a record of Aristides' private thoughts and feelings it is necessary to see them as a message of a skilled orator to his prospective audience. Aristides' claim that it was Asclepius himself who ordered him to resume literary activity, and then took an active role in Aristides' rhetorical training while at his temple, serves two purposes: it depicts Aristides' vocation as a religious calling, and it recruits a divine authority such as Asclepius to vouch for the quality of Aristides' rhetorical and scholarly work.

⁶³ Aristid. *Or.* 42.12 K.

⁶⁴ The subject of authority to prescribe health-care in classical antiquity, as intriguing and complicated as it is, extends the scope of this present article. It is enough to note that there was no system of licencing medical practice in the Graeco-Roman world and that all legislation concerning physicians was set in place and conducted without the assistance of physicians. Furthermore, temple medicine was in charge of a major part of health-care provision throughout classical antiquity.

authority of a scholarly tradition.⁶⁵ Likewise, those who were seen as authoritative in diagnosing the sick included, alongside physicians, gymnastic trainers, root cutters and people like Cato, Celsus, and Pliny the Elder who were well-educated individuals and who relied upon experience and common knowledge, but who were not trained doctors themselves. The diagnosis of epilepsy in particular was not reserved solely to physicians as can be clearly seen in the trial of Apuleius on account of *Magia*.⁶⁶

In the middle of the second century CE, the prominent rhetor Apuleius was charged with sorcery. The background for this unusual accusation, as it emerges from Apuleius' *Apologia* is as follows: on his way to Alexandria Apuleius was persuaded by his long-standing friend Pontianus, with whom he shared rooms during their studies at Athens, to stay for a year in Pontianus' native Oea. During that year, and with his friend's blessings, Apuleius married Pontianus' mother, a rich widow named Pudentilla. Some of Pudentilla's relations were displeased with this marriage, however, and accused Apuleius of having induced her to marry him by magic. The case was tried during the assizes under the auspices of the proconsul Claudius Maximus.⁶⁷

Apuleius met these charges with an eloquent and forensic speech, commonly referred to as the *Apologia* or, more officially, *Pro Se De Magia*. It is a literary masterpiece,⁶⁸ sharing many features of Second Sophistic literature.⁶⁹ In the course of his defence Apuleius depicts himself as deeply interested in medicine.⁷⁰ This deceleration of his interest aimed to explain to the court Apuleius' habit of dissecting fish and examining their entrails. According to Apuleius, physicians were distinguished from the *magoi* not by their methods but by their purposes; physicians aimed to cure. Apuleius even made reference to those physicians of previous generations who had cured wounds using incantations.⁷¹

Apuleius then rebuked the accusation made against him that he had cast a spell on a certain slave, a boy named Thallus, by claiming that this boy was an epileptic.⁷² Apuleius went on to describe the boy's symptoms

⁶⁵ Lloyd (2003) 2.

⁶⁶ Apul. *Apol.* 43, with Israelowich (2016a) *ad loc.*

⁶⁷ For dating see Guey (1951) and Syme (1959).

⁶⁸ Helm (1955) 86-108.

⁶⁹ Hunink (2001) 11.

⁷⁰ Apul. *Apol.* 40.

⁷¹ Apul. *Apol.* 40.

⁷² Apul. *Apol.* 43.

and there is nothing in his account which suggests that either he or his judges were seen as unqualified to make such a diagnosis. Apuleius even called upon the rest of the house slaves to testify that Thallus was an epileptic.⁷³ Furthermore, the highest authority Apuleius recruited for his arguments concerning the nature of epilepsy was not a physician but Plato.⁷⁴ In a similar way to Apuleius' arguments, the diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic is yet another example of the lack of monopoly of physicians over things medical and the freedom taken by laymen, including the most erudite, to make medical predicaments.

A further, perhaps more innovative, explanation to the appearance of this new diagnosis of Aristides rests on a shift in the understanding of the nature of epilepsy in late fourth-century Athens. Since the beginning of the Christian era the victims of epilepsy were often viewed as being subject to a supernatural power. They were depicted as the willing or unwilling vessels of a deity.⁷⁵ In consequence, the change in religious climate had a significant influence on the perception of epilepsy. Christian authors, from Origen onwards, interpreted the account in the Gospels of Jesus curing a boy, as a miraculous cure of epilepsy.⁷⁶ "This", Temkin argued, "was the decisive break with pagan antiquity. Now the popular belief, in which the epileptic, just as in the possessed, saw nothing but demoniacs, had formed itself into the body of opinion".⁷⁷ Aristides depicted himself as a vessel of Asclepius.⁷⁸ The *Sacred Tales* can be read as a narrative of redemption, in which Asclepius saves Aristides, trains him as an orator, and is responsible for his professional success. This hypothesis, however, is not without flaws. Though the healing power of Asclepius was acknowledged by Christians, and though Asclepius was one of the most prominent pagan deities in late antiquity, Asclepius and Christ were never seen as synonyms in late antiquity. However, the shift in cultural understanding of epilepsy, which was encouraged by Christian thinking at this time, was clearly influential on contemporary attitudes. Sopater's diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic can therefore be placed within the context of this changing perception of epilepsy.

⁷³ Apul. *Apol.* 44.

⁷⁴ Apul. *Apol.* 49-51, where Apuleius refers to Pl. *Tim.* 85a-b.

⁷⁵ Temkin (1971) 86-87.

⁷⁶ St. Mark ix 14-29; St. Matthew xvii 14-40; St. Luke ix 37-43; Origen *Comment. in Matth.* t. 13.4; col. 1104-1105; Dögler (1934) 95-109.

⁷⁷ Temkin (1971) 92.

⁷⁸ Aristid. *Or.* 42.12 K.

Finally, it is noteworthy that Sopater was not making a medical judgement when describing Aristides as an epileptic. He was not making a reassessment of Aristides' illness on the basis of his symptoms. Therefore, while this new piece of evidence, which Sopater provided offers a limited contribution to a fundamental medical history of Aristides, it does, however, remind us that the field of medicine was not the preserve of physicians alone. Likewise, Sopater's diagnosis of Aristides as an epileptic indicates how distorted a picture of ancient medicine we will have if we rely solely on the works of the physicians. In the context of epilepsy in classical antiquity, Sopater's description of Aristides as an epileptic proves that the polemic between those who understood epilepsy as just another disease and those who ascribed to it a religious meaning was far from over more than 800 years after the Hippocratic treatise on the *Sacred Disease* was composed. It is Aristides' religious rather than medical experiences, which encouraged a diagnosis of epileptic to be bestowed upon him. Namely it was Aristides' proclamation of his oratorical skills as being a gift of the god and his public depiction of himself as the god's vessel that led to him becoming associated with the "sacred disease". Considering why Aristides was described as an epileptic enables us to form a better understanding of how the disease of epilepsy was conceived of in classical antiquity and to note how social, cultural, and religious changes affected the manner this disease was comprehended.

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THE URBAN SYSTEM OF ROMAN EGYPT IN
THE EARLY THIRD CENTURY AD
AN ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACH TO
CITY-SIZE DISTRIBUTION IN A ROMAN PROVINCE*

Abstract: Based on a detailed study of archaeological and papyrological data this contribution argues that a comprehensive reconstruction of the urban system of Roman Egypt can be achieved by relating the surviving evidence for city sizes to the sizes of administrative territories, to regional variations in amounts of marginal land and to region-specific levels of soil productivity. Using this approach the approximate sizes of all of the forty-nine nome capitals of the Nile valley and the Delta and three further cities which did not have this administrative status can be estimated. If Alexandria is added to the picture, we end up with the conclusion that the urban hierarchy of Roman Egypt can be described as a ‘primo-concave’ system in which the vast majority of cities were sustained by their immediate hinterlands but which also had room for an unusually large ‘primate city’ and a tiny number of riverine and maritime port cities whose populations must have been fed in part on imported foodstuffs. Depending on whether Roman Egypt is assigned a population of 5-6 million or 8 million, we are dealing with a society in which either between 17 per cent and 26 per cent of the population lived in cities or with one in which the urbanisation rate did not exceed 16 per cent. The former scenario seems more likely.

While the political, economic, social and cultural roles of the cities of the Roman empire are discussed in countless publications, few attempts have been made to collect the abundant archaeological evidence for city sizes in the Mediterranean world of the first to third centuries AD.¹ Yet there can be no doubt that it would be immensely valuable to have good collections of size estimates for the cities of particular parts of the Roman world or, better still, a comprehensive collection of estimates for the entire Roman empire. Without such data sets ancient historians cannot hope even to begin addressing a whole range of important topics which have been discussed, and are being discussed, by specialists dealing with later historical periods, such as the approximate number of people living in cities, urbanisation rates, relationships between urban expansion and economic growth,

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¹ Wilson (2011) and Hanson (2016) claim to provide empire-wide surveys of city sizes, but their data sets are unreliable. For city sizes in Roman Italy see de Ligt (2016).

levels of economic integration as illuminated by regional city-size distributions, or similarities and differences between regional urban systems.

In the case of Roman Egypt a handful of papyri shed some light on the number of taxpayers, households or houses which were counted in quarters of various cities during the first three centuries AD, but so far only some of the size estimates contained in the archaeological literature have been collected, and not all of these estimates have been checked against the underlying excavations reports.²

One of the aims of the present study is to collect as many size estimates as can be retrieved from the gigantic archaeological literature of the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It will appear that the archaeological data are far more plentiful than might be thought, but also that some pieces of the jigsaw cannot be recovered. One way of getting around this problem is to extrapolate the sizes of nome capitals from nome sizes. This tactic has been used before,³ but since the only existing study of this type does not take into account regional variations in fertility, or regional differences in the amount of marginal land, there is considerable room for fine-tuning. Moreover, no attempt has been made to extend this type of analysis to the Delta.

Since a full explanation of the methodology which will be used to deal with variations in soil productivity will be provided at a later point, I here restrict myself to a few summary remarks. The basic idea informing my attempt to model variations in fertility is simply that the considerable variations in wheat yields per hectare which have been observed in Egypt during the early and mid-twentieth centuries (before the completion of the Aswan Dam) are likely to have been mirrored by similar variations in Antiquity, *regardless of actual yield levels*. In other words, if wheat yields in a particular part of mid-twentieth-century Egypt were 50 per cent higher than in another part of the country, the same difference may be assumed to have existed in Antiquity, even if the use of chemical fertilisers had increased actual yields in both areas beyond ancient levels.

² Existing studies which provide size estimates for some of the cities of Roman Egypt include Bagnall (1993) 52, Bowman (2000), and Bowman (2011). Rathbone (1990), Alston & Alston (1997), and Tacoma (2006) provide population estimates for various Egyptian cities. The size estimates given by Hanson (2016) are not based on a re-examination of the underlying archaeological literature. In part because the archaeological evidence for city sizes has never been collected systematically, recent estimates of levels of urbanisation in Roman Egypt range from 20-25% (Rathbone 1990, 121), via 30% (Bagnall 1993, 312) all the way to 37% (Bagnall & Frier 1994, 36).

³ Tacoma (2006).

Similarly, while the surviving evidence does not permit us to establish the proportion of marginal land in each nome, detailed data which were collected during the first decade of the twentieth century make it possible to discern broad regional patterns which are likely to have existed also in third-century AD Egypt.

Using this approach the actual territory of each nome can be converted into a 'weighed territory' by artificially increasing the territories of exceptionally fertile nomes and down-sizing the areas of those nomes which contained large amounts of less fertile land and/or a large proportion of marginal land.

As a final step I will explore the quantitative relationship between 'weighed territories' and city sizes. Unlike various existing studies of the urban system of Roman Egypt, the present inquiry will focus primarily on the physical size of cities (expressed in hectares). Of course it remains reasonable to posit a broad correlation between city size and population size, but since size estimates are easier to obtain than population estimates, it seems wise to postpone a discussion of this issue until the archaeological evidence relating to the physical size of cities has been collected.

This is not to suggest that the archaeological evidence is easily obtained or that its interpretation is straightforward. For various reasons which will be explained in the first part of this article, many of the size estimates which are provided by the scholarly literature, or can be derived from it, come with a considerable margin of error. In the case of the Delta, moreover, very few attempts have been made to establish even the approximate sizes of nomes, making it difficult to study relationships between city size and nome size. However, while the deficiencies of the archaeological data, and the very significant gaps in our understanding of the administrative geography of Lower Egypt, cannot be entirely overcome, it is my contention that genuine progress can be made with reconstructing the overall shape of the urban system of Roman Egypt and also that the evidence is good enough to permit some interesting conclusions about the relationship between city size distributions and underlying economic structures.

DEFINING CITIES AND COUNTING THEM

In the vast literature on historical and contemporary cities many different criteria are used to distinguish 'urban' agglomerations from other types of settlement. Many modern geographers apply an exclusively quantitative

standard, with only those agglomerations whose populations exceed a certain demographic threshold (e.g. 10,000 inhabitants, or 5,000, or 2,000) being classified as 'urban'.⁴ Combining the idea of a demographic threshold with an economic or functional approach, other researchers define cities as "sizeable settlements of people most of whom do not grow food".⁵

In the case of Roman Egypt there are good reasons to adopt a juridical or administrative approach, not least because juridical or administrative status tended to correlate not just with population size but also with occupational and functional diversity. Of course, Alexandria, one of the largest cities of the Roman empire, is a crystal-clear case, but the same connection between juridical status, size and functional profile can be observed in the case of the nome capitals (*metropoleis*).⁶ It is true that there were some cities in Roman Egypt which looked like nome capitals without having metropolitan status, but all of these cities had some special juridical status. The city of Naukratis, for instance, was a self-governing *polis* in the territory of the Saite nome, and the port city of Pelusium had been detached from the Sethroite nome and got its own coins. The third city of this group was Antinoopolis (founded in AD 130), which was the seat of a nomarchy within the Hermopolite nome but also one of the four cities of second-to-third-century Egypt which had *polis* status.

When trying to establish the number of 'official' cities in Roman Egypt during the first half of the third century AD, which is the chronological focus of this study, the greatest challenge is to recover the number of nome capitals. During the Ptolemaic period the number of nomes, and therefore the number of *metropoleis*, had started to creep up, mainly as a result of the splitting up of various nomes in the Delta, and this tendency continued during the first 250 years of Roman rule (and beyond).

Between the late first and early third centuries AD the appearance of 'nome coinages', the evidence provided by Ptolemy and the availability of a list of nomes which has been variously dated to AD 140-150 or to

⁴ This is the approach of de Vries (1984). Cf. Tacoma (2012) 131-132 for a brief discussion of the applicability of this criterion to the cities of Roman Egypt.

⁵ Hohenberg & Lees (1985) 17.

⁶ From a narrowly juridical point of view the *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt were neither *poleis* nor *municipia* nor *coloniae* nor *civitates*, but it is generally agreed that these nome capitals were beginning to look like self-governing cities in other parts of the empire during the first and second centuries AD. After AD 200 each nome capital had a *boule*. Cf. Bowman & Rathbone (1992).

the second half of the second century AD allow us to trace the appearance of some new *metropoleis* and to calculate the number of nome capitals which must have existed at the end of this period.⁷

After various emperors of the second century AD had detached the Hypselite nome from the Latopolites, the Hermonthite nome from the Diospolites and the Nilopolite nome from the Herakleopolites, there were 21 nome capitals in the Nile Valley and in the Fayum.⁸ In the oases of the western desert only Hibis and Psobthis seem to have had metropolitan status before the administrative reforms of Diocletian.

The first and second centuries AD also witnessed the creation of various new nomes in the Delta. Examples include *Mareōtis* and *Alexandreōn chōrā*, both of which were established in the Julio-Claudian period. In addition to this, some nomes which had existed in this area during earlier periods of Egyptian history appear to have been resurrected (though not necessarily in the same form). Certain cases include the Lower Sebennytic nome, the Diospolite nome, Phthenotes and the Kabasites, with re-foundation in the Roman period only being one possible scenario in the case of the Xoite, Phthemphuthi and Nesyt nomes.⁹ Whatever the precise chronology might have been, we can be more or less certain that there were 28 nome capitals in the Delta during the second half of the second century AD, with no indication of any further increase taking place during the first half of the next century. In addition to this two nome capitals were situated to the west of the Delta, one (the city of Paraetionium) along the Mediterranean coast and another (the small city of Ammon) in the Siwa Oasis.

The total tally for the Nile Valley, the Fayum and the Delta is 53 ‘official’ cities (Alexandria, 49 nome capitals, Antinoopolis, Pelusium and Naukratis). Including Paraetionium and the three *metropoleis* of Oasis

⁷ Nome coinages: Geissen & Weber (2003-2008). List of nomes: *P. Oxy.* XLVII 3362.

⁸ Eller (2015) argues that the Hypselite nome was detached by Trajan or Hadrian, but in *P. Oxy.* XLVII 3362 (AD 140-150 according to *BL* XII, p. 150), line 12, the “Lykopolites and Hypsele” appear as a single nome, whereas in *SB* X 10530, lines 1-2 (AD 143), and in Ptolemy (4.5.64) the Hypselite is a separate nome. The first ‘nome coins’ of the Hypselites belong to AD 108 or 109 (Eller 2015, 374), but the early coins (like the designation of the nome) might point to autonomous status rather than to the creation of a separate nome. Conversely, Ptolemy 4.5.26 refers to Nilopolis as a city in the Herakleopolite nome, whereas the Nilopolites appears as a separate nome in *P. Oxy.* XLVII 3362, lines 18-19.

⁹ Thomas (1967) argues that the Xoite, Phthemphuthi and Menelaite nomes existed as early as the third century BC.

Maior (Dakhla and Kharga), Oasis Minor (Bahariya) and Ammoniake (Siwa) raises this figure to 57, but since the geographical focus of this study will be on those parts of Egypt which were affected by the annual inundations of the Nile, these four cities will rarely be referred to in the remainder of this contribution.

There are some obvious downsides to an approach which uses juridical or administrative status to draw the dividing line between 'cities' and other types of settlement in Roman Egypt. To begin with, some nome capitals are known to have lost their position to settlements which had previously been 'secondary'. Under Trajan, for instance, Apollonopolis Heptakomias became the new *metropolis* of the Aphroditopolites which was renamed Apollonopolites. In the north-western Delta Gynaikopolis, the *metropolis* of the Gynaikopolites, lost its position to Andropolis (*sic!*), which remained the capital of the Andropolites until Late Antiquity.¹⁰ Degraded nome capitals cannot have ceased to be 'urban' overnight, and those settlements which replaced them must have had some 'urban' features before they were promoted.¹¹

Publications dealing with some of the large villages of the Fayum, such as Philadelphia, Tebtynis and Karanis, have pointed out the presence of various 'urban' features, such as evidence for 'town planning', or the presence of sizeable groups of residents whose primary occupation was not agriculture. For this reason such agglomerations are sometimes referred to as 'agro-towns', and indeed Philadelphia is referred to as a *polis* in a Ptolemaic papyrus. However, as pointed out by Bagnall, men working primarily at a trade other than agriculture accounted for only 6 per cent of the adult male population of Karanis in the second century AD.¹²

During the second and third centuries AD Philadelphia, Tebtynis and Karanis appear to have been central places of 'toparchies', territorial units which played a role in the collection of certain taxes. Even without further information it does not seem far-fetched to suppose that the populations

¹⁰ Geissen & Weber (2005b) 302-303.

¹¹ Based on a tax register of AD 525/526, Zuckerman (2004) 223 calculates that the former nome capital of Aphroditopolis/Aphrodito might still have had c. 7,000 inhabitants in the early-Byzantine period, while admitting that the information provided by the register is compatible with a lower population estimate.

¹² van Minnen (1994) 234; Bowman (2001) 174. On occupations at Karanis see Bagnall (1993) 129. Alston (2001) 162-163 distinguishes between a large category of villages whose economies were overwhelmingly agricultural and a smaller group which seem to have operated as market centres and where craftsmen and traders might have accounted for more than 15 per cent of the population.

of at least some of the toparchy centres of the other nomes also included considerable numbers of non-agricultural specialists and that many of these places provided lower-order goods and services to the inhabitants of the surrounding districts.¹³ The other side of the coin is that the 53 ‘official’ cities of Roman Egypt clearly were far more ‘urban’ than any other type of settlement, not only in terms of physical dimensions and monumental overhead, but also because their populations were overwhelmingly non-agricultural.¹⁴ In other words, whatever central-place functions might have been performed by various secondary settlements, there can be no doubt that Alexandria, the 49 nome capitals and the three cities of Naukratis, Antinoopolis and Pelusium were the most important components of the ‘urban system’ of Roman Egypt, however defined or conceptualised.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

a. *Vanished mounds*

Many archaeological reports which were written during the second half of the nineteenth century or the first decades of the twentieth century identify the digging away of remains of ancient mud-brick buildings with the aim of using them as a fertiliser (*sebakh*) as the most important threat to the preservation of mounds marking the sites of ancient Egyptian cities.¹⁵ In an early twentieth-century report dealing with the mounds of Atfih, one of which was the site of the nome capital of Aphroditopolis, the British Egyptologist Johnson gave a gloomy description of the vast site: “The first prospect was the melancholy one of many years’ promiscuous plundering and *sebakh*-digging carried on unhindered”. He went on to note that the fellahin had begun to expand their activities to other areas: “as the mounds of the ancient city vanished, the big modern village, or rather group of villages, of some 20,000 souls, turned more and more to the cemetery for its supply of *sebakh*, the mud walls and hard mud filling of the graves forming a never-failing and invaluable source of supply”.¹⁶

¹³ For toparchies outside the Fayum see, for instance, Blouin (2014) 120–121.

¹⁴ Cf. Tacoma (2012) 127–128. For monumental overhead, comprising large temple precincts, agoras, gymnasiums and baths see Bagnall (1993) 45–47. Only a handful of cities seem to have possessed theatres or hippodromes.

¹⁵ Bailey (1999).

¹⁶ Johnson (1911) 7.

The site of Tell el-Moqdam (ancient Leontopolis) provides another good illustration. When Naville visited the site in 1892, he described it as a maze of walls, streets and alleys, estimating its size as “several hundred hectares”. About fifteen years later Daressy reported the size of the remaining mounds as only 150 *feddans* (63 hectares). At present, Tell Moqdam survives as a low mound with a length of *c.* 1,000 m. and a maximum width of *c.* 750 m., suggesting that the period of fast destruction ended shortly after Daressy’s visit.¹⁷ Still, up to four-fifths of the original mound might have disappeared, and other reports which were written during the first decades of the twentieth century make it clear that the sites of various other prominent ancient cities, such as Tell Basta, Kom el-Atrib, Sa el-Hagar and Sakha, had also been reduced by the activities of *sebakhin*.¹⁸

On the positive side the descriptions and maps contained in the *Description de l’Égypte* seem to refer to a period before the heyday of *sebak*-digging, and the same observation applies to various other nineteenth-century reports and travel accounts. Some sites, moreover, do not seem to have dug out by *sebakhin* at all, or only to a small degree, mainly because of their relatively remote locations. In some cases, however, the original size of the mounds marking the site of a *metropolis* of the Roman period cannot be recovered with a sufficient degree of precision. In the case of Leontopolis, for instance, we will never know if the size of the area originally occupied by the mounds was closer to 200 hectares, to 300 hectares or perhaps even to 400 hectares.

b. *Misinterpretation of quantitative information*

For one reason or another many archaeological reports, as well as some data bases derived from such reports, specify the size of settlement mounds by giving figures for their length and maximum width. Since maximum width exceeds average width in the vast majority of cases, size estimates which have been calculated using such figures tend to exaggerate the size of vanished or surviving mounds.

In most cases the resulting distortion is not very serious. On the website of the Delta Survey Project the dimensions of the site of Sethroe/Herakleopolis Parva are (correctly) specified as 1,000 × 570 m. At first

¹⁷ Naville (1894) 27, and Appendix 2a at the end of this article.

¹⁸ Chassinat (1922) 9.

sight these figures might seem to suggest that the site occupied an area of about 57 ha. However, since average width was only about 450 m., 45 ha would be a more accurate estimate for the mound. On the same website Tell el Farain, the site of ancient Buto, is credited with an area of $1,000 \times 1,000$ m. In theory this might imply a total area of 100 ha for the areas occupied by the mounds, but the correct figure (for the mound, not for the built-up area) is approximately 65 ha. In this particular case, the task of estimating the original size of the mounds is complicated by the fact that a small part of the Tell seems to have disappeared during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the lesson remains that a reliable size estimate cannot be obtained by multiplying length by maximum width.¹⁹

An extreme example of the kind of distortion which may arise from an uncritical use of quantitative information supplied by archaeological publications concerns the city of Hibis, the metropolis of the Kharga Oasis. In his monograph on the Isis temple of Hibis, Winlock estimated the length of the area occupied by the remains of the ancient city as *c.* 1,200 m. and its width as *c.* 1,000 m.²⁰ In a recent publication these figures are interpreted as pointing to an urban area of *c.* 120 ha.²¹ An inspection of Winlock's map, however, shows that Hibis was an irregularly shaped city (with a central lake) whose size can be estimated as approximately 60 ha.

c. Size of mounds and size of cities

In some cases it is difficult to determine if the quantitative information supplied by various older publications refers to mounds which were entirely occupied by ancient cities. When Johnson visited the mounds of Atfih/Aphroditopolis, he was "thoroughly surprised by the immensity of the site, which stretches for more than three kilometres north and south and is often half a kilometer and more in width".²² This has inspired estimates of 125-150 ha for the ancient city.²³ If Aphroditopolis really belonged to this size bracket, we would have to conclude that it was about the same size as

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of Sethroe and Buto see Appendix 2.1.

²⁰ Winlock (1941) 2.

²¹ Bowman (2011) 342. For an even higher estimate of 150 ha see Bowman (2000) 178.

²² Johnson (1911) 6.

²³ Bowman (2000) 178, (2011) 342

Hermopolis and one of the largest nome capitals of the Nile Valley. However, when Georges Daressy investigated the cemetery of the pharaonic and Graeco-Roman city, the poor quality of the tombs led him to conclude that the ancient city cannot have flourished: “dans l’Antiquité la ville d’Aphroditopolis était probablement aussi pauvre, aussi dénuée de ressources que la moderne Atfieh [...]”.²⁴

How can these radically diverging assessments be reconciled? Part of the explanation seems to be that Johnson’s report uses the term ‘site’ to refer to all areas occupied by the ancient city and its cemeteries, the latter actually being the principal target of his investigations.²⁵ In any case, a short travel account which appeared in 1881 reports that the houses of the modern village of Atfih were built “on the highest of the tumuli, sixty or seventy feet above the level of the plain”. Interestingly, it also appears that the villagers of the mid or late nineteenth century had re-occupied some houses which had been erected in Antiquity, after clearing away the fine dust with which they had become filled.²⁶ If these indications can be relied upon, the dimensions given by Johnson cannot be used as a guide to the size or lay-out of the city of Aphroditopolis in any period.

Similar problems of interpretation exist in the case of other cities. Various recent publications give the size of the mounds of Tanis as 177 ha. While the accuracy of this estimate is not in doubt, we also happen to know that in Roman times the southern-most spur of the tell was the site of a cemetery. In addition to this a handful of Roman graves, probably of the second and third centuries AD, were found in the flat area immediately to the south of the high mounds surrounding the temple of Amun.²⁷ Based on these indications we can be certain that Roman-period Tanis did not occupy more than 90 ha.

In the case of Roman-period Bubastis (Tell Basta) the task of estimating the size of the Roman city is complicated by the presence of large ritual spaces which had been inherited from pharaonic times. Based on indications supplied by various publications of the first half of the nineteenth century, the size of the area originally occupied by Tell Basta may be estimated as *c.* 150 ha. However, most of the western half of this vast area was occupied by the cat necropolis of the 26th dynasty, by the Old

²⁴ Daressy (1903) 160.

²⁵ This reading is supported by the fact that Johnson places the tomb excavated by Daressy in 1902, which was situated *c.* 100 m. to the east of the cultivated area (Daressy 1903, 160), “to the north-west of the site” (1911, 6).

²⁶ Oliphant (1881) 572.

²⁷ Petrie (1885) 36-37; Harlaut (2000); Brissaud (2010) Fig. 5.

Kingdom and New Kingdom necropoleis, by the *Ka* chapels of Pepi I and Teti, and by the remains of a Middle Kingdom Palace. Since none of these areas was a functioning part of Roman-period Bubastis, it would be odd to include them in our estimate for the built-up area. Under normal circumstances the temple of Bastet, which occupied a central position between the western zone and the civilian city, would certainly have to be regarded as an integral part of early-imperial Bubastis. Recent archaeological research, however, has revealed that the temple collapsed sometime between the late third century BC and the Roman conquest, perhaps as a result of an earthquake.²⁸ In the Roman period smelting ovens and kilns for ceramic production were built in the former temple precinct, and limestone blocks belonging to the ruined temple may have been used for lime production. It has been suggested that the Roman well which was discovered in this area was built with the aim of supplying the workers engaged in these activities with fresh water.²⁹ If the area of the Bastet temple is included, we obtain an estimate of *c.* 70 ha for the Roman city. Excluding the temple enclosure would reduce this figure to *c.* 60 ha.

d. *Developments over time*

The late fourth century BC witnessed the foundation of Alexandria and Ptolemais. Although there had been some habitation at the sites of these cities, this had not been urban in character.

Various cities which had been important during earlier periods of Egyptian history show signs of contraction in Ptolemaic or Roman times. As the example of Bubastis shows, ritual areas which had been integral parts of pharaonic cities might effectively become non-urban in the Hellenistic or Roman periods. Other cities shrunk because their political importance had been greatly diminished. The obvious example is Thebes/Diospolis Magna. Estimates for the built-up area of Thebes during the New Kingdom vary from 280 ha to a staggering 796 ha.³⁰ However, when Strabo visited Egypt in the early years of the Principate, the area of the city was occupied by a group of villages.³¹ While the surviving evidence does not permit us to estimate the size of Roman-period Thebes, there can be no doubt that the pharaonic figures have no relevance for the Roman period.

²⁸ Rosenow & Rehren (2014) 171-172.

²⁹ Tietze & Grönwald (1998).

³⁰ Mumford (2010) 331; Uphill (2001) 54

³¹ Strabo 17.1.46.

In the western Delta Sais appears to have peaked during the 26th dynasty, when it was developed as the capital of Egypt. In this period the city might have expanded to 300 ha, or even to 375 ha.³² However, after the Persian conquest the Saite palatial complex inside the North Enclosure was abandoned, and the city contracted back to the original site near the modern village of Sa el-Hagar. Although the southern limit of Ptolemaic and post-Ptolemaic Sais has not been established with absolute certainty, the city is unlikely to have occupied more than c. 50 ha during the second and third centuries AD.³³

The archaeological areas of many Egyptian cities include multiple mounds, and some of these cities are known to have occupied one of these mounds in pharaonic times but an adjacent one during the Hellenistic or Roman period. Diospolis Inferior (Tell el-Balamun), where the western mound (c. 15 ha) is Roman, whereas the eastern one (c. 10 ha) is mainly dynastic, provides a good illustration.³⁴ According to a recent estimate, the remains of the ancient city occupy an area of 80 ha if the flat area of the temple precinct (15 ha) is included.³⁵ However, adding the size of the area occupied by the western mound to that of the temple precinct produces an estimate of only 30 ha for the Roman *metropolis*.

While some clear cases of urban decline have been identified, the overall picture suggested by the archaeological and papyrological evidence is one of urban expansion during the Hellenistic and early-Roman periods.³⁶ In this sense the possibility of urban shrinkage presents fewer methodological problems than various other complicating factors, such as the co-existence of cities and cemeteries on the same mounds, or the abandonment of various ritual spaces which had been inherited from pharaonic times.

CITY-SIZES IN THE NILE VALLEY

A critical re-evaluation of the numerous estimates provided by publications of the past 200 years, or implied by maps contained in such publications, permits us to put an approximate figure on the built-up areas of twelve *metropoleis* and one non-metropolitan city (Antinoopolis) which

³² Wilson (2005) 8, (2012c).

³³ Wilson (2006) Fig. 64, with discussion on p. 197-199 and 204.

³⁴ Spencer (1996) 14-19.

³⁵ Wilson (2012d).

³⁶ See, for instance, van Minnen (2007) 209

were situated either in the Nile Valley or in the Fayum. If we move from north to south, we obtain the following list: 1. Arsinoë: 260 ha; 2. Herakleopolis: 144 ha?; 3. Oxyrhynchus: 125 ha; 4. Antinoopolis: 125 ha; 5. Hermopolis: 160-175 ha; 6. Lykopolis: 75 ha; 7. Panopolis: 75 ha?; 8. Tentyris: 60 ha; 9. Koptos: 85 ha; 10. Hermonthis: 30 ha; 11. Latopolis: 25-30 ha; 12. Apollonopolis (Edfu): 30 ha; 13. Ombi: 10 ha.³⁷

In his book on the urban elites of Egypt in the third century AD, Tacoma has observed that there seems to have existed a broad relationship between the size of nomes and the size of nome capitals, and he has used this insight to estimate the sizes of urban populations in the Nile Valley.³⁸ However, while the overall validity of such an approach is beyond doubt, there are various complicating factors which do not seem to have received sufficient attention.

During the past twenty years the starting point of all studies of the economy and society of Roman Egypt which factor in variations in nome size has been the list of nome sizes contained in Bagnall's *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (1993). As Bagnall explains in a footnote, this survey is a slightly modified version of a list of estimates contained in Karl Butzer's pioneering *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt* (1976). One of the most important adjustments concerns the Fayum, where enormous amounts of land were reclaimed during the first half of the third century BC. While Butzer credited the Fayum with 1,300 km² of arable land in the Ptolemaic period, Bagnall provides an estimate of only 900 km² for the fourth and fifth centuries AD.³⁹ Recent hydrological research and studies of settlement patterns in the Graeco-Roman period have demonstrated that the latter figure is far too low. For the purposes of this study I will use Clarysse and Thompson's estimate of 1,500 km², but with the important proviso that this relatively high figure allows for marshes, ravines and other uncultivated areas.⁴⁰

Various other adjustments made by Bagnall reflect changes in administrative boundaries. The Hermopolite nome of the Roman period comprised the 15th and 16th nomes of pharaonic times (which occupied

³⁷ See Appendix 1a.

³⁸ Tacoma (2006) 50-55.

³⁹ Butzer (1976) 93; Bagnall (1993) 335.

⁴⁰ Clarysse & Thompson (2006) 90 n. 2; cf. Manning (2003) 107. A more recent publication (Bowman 2013, 228) operates with an estimate of 1,350 km² for the inhabited areas of the Fayum.

650 km² and 377 km² respectively) as well as a chunk of the old 17th nome (115 km²), prompting Bagnall to provide an estimate of 1,140 km² for the size of the Hermopolites in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁴¹ While this adjustment looks reasonable, the same cannot be said of Bagnall's decision to reduce Butzer's estimate for the Kynopolite nome (563 km²) to only 110 km², on the grounds that this nome had lost all of its West Bank territory to the Oxyrhynchite and Hermopolite nomes. Thanks to the appearance of a new edition of a tax list from Pheretnuis it has become clear that the Kynopolite nome did include a considerable amount of West Bank territory (c. 110 km²), so that Bagnall's estimate for this nome should be doubled.⁴²

Bagnall's estimates for the Apollonopolite Parva and Antaiopolite nomes are also open to challenge. His figure for the former nome (206 km²) assumes that it occupied the same territory as pharaonic nome 12. However, since the territory of pharaonic nome 12 was confined to the East Bank whereas the Apollonopolite Parva nome of Roman times was on the West Bank, this cannot be correct. In reality, pharaonic nome 12 seems to have been absorbed into the territory of the Antaiopolite nome, while the territory of pharaonic nome 10 was split, its East Bank territory being incorporated within the Antaiopolites and its West Bank territory within the Aphroditopolite/Apollonopolite nome.⁴³ If two fifths of the territory of pharaonic nome 10 were absorbed into the Antaiopolite nome, the size of the latter can be re-estimated as 418 km², leaving 319 km² for the Apollonopolites Parva.⁴⁴

Detailed investigations carried out by various scholars during the past twenty years suggest some further adjustments, but none of these is dramatic. Based on Falivene's painstaking examination of the toponymic evidence from the Herakleopolite nome, Bagnall's (and Butzer's) estimates for the Herakleopolite and Nilopolite nomes can be raised from 643+ km² to c. 750 km² and from 133 km² to c. 200 km² respectively.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Bagnall (1993) 334. During the second and third centuries AD the Hermopolite nome also comprised the territory of the later Koussite nome (272 km²), raising the figure for this period to 1,412 km².

⁴² Sijpesteijn & Worp (1993); cf. Rowlandson (1996), Map 3.

⁴³ Abdel Ghani (2003).

⁴⁴ These estimates assume that during the late second and early third centuries AD the Nile flowed approximately 3 km west of its modern course in the area of the Antaiopolite nome (Butzer 1976, 35; Hassan 2010).

⁴⁵ The Nilopolite nome of the late second and early third centuries AD comprised the Koma and Bousiris toparchies as well as the old Tilothis toparchy (Falivene 1998, 138,

In principle, a higher estimate for the Herakleopolite nome should translate into a lower figure for the Oxyrhynchites, but since Butzer's estimate for the latter nome is on the low side, no such reduction is necessary. In fact, the most recent estimate for the Oxyrhynchite nome (which allows for the existence of a substantial chunk of Kynopolite territory on the West Bank) is 800 km², slightly higher than the figure of 780 km² suggested by Butzer.⁴⁶

The revised figure for the Nilopolite nome of the late second and early third centuries AD implies that this nome extended farther south than its pharaonic predecessor (as reconstructed by Butzer). On the other hand, it was demonstrated long ago by Yoyotte that the northernmost part of this nome, including the old nome capital Akanthōn/Akanthopolis (Kafr Ammar) had been absorbed by the Memphite nome, which appears to have been at least 30 km² larger in Roman times than it had been during the third and second millenniums BC.⁴⁷

Finally, Christensen has calculated a figure of 157.5 km² (rather than 137 km²) for the Apollonopolite Magna nome, implying a corresponding downward adjustment, from 72 km² to 51.5 km², for the Ombite nome.⁴⁸

Before exploring relationships between nome size and the size of nome capitals, we must factor in variations in fertility and in the amount of marginal land. In the case of Egypt, these two variables tend to correlate, for the obvious reason that in those areas which had large amounts of marginal land at least some of this land was cultivated, thereby depressing average soil productivity. Despite this connection, we are clearly

and the map at the end of her book). Based on Falivene's map, Fischer-Bovet (2014) 206 n. 43 provides an estimate of 840 km² for the Herakleopolite nome (before the creation of the Nilopolites), but this estimate is based on the simplifying assumption that this nome occupied a rectangular area of 70 × 12 km.

⁴⁶ Rowlandson (1996) 17. Krüger's estimate of 900 km² for the Oxyrhynchites (Krüger 1990, 37) seems over-optimistic.

⁴⁷ Yoyotte (1961) 74. My estimate of 30 km² assumes that the river Nile flowed c. 2.5 km to the west of today's river bed in this area (Butzer 1960, 27; Falivene 1998, 5).

⁴⁸ Christensen (2002) 114-115. In some cases recent toponymical research has confirmed Butzer's estimates as basically correct, for instance in the case of the Panopolite nome (Geens 2007, 112-129). My tally for the aggregate area occupied by the nomes of the Nile Valley, the Fayum and the Delta and by the extra-territorial districts of the western Delta is 28,982 km². Since my estimates for the amounts of marginal land add up to 7,231 km², we are left with 21,751 km² for the cultivated area. Most estimates for the cultivated land in the Hellenistic and Roman periods lie in the range of 20,000 to 27,000 km². See Scheidel (2001) 223; Bowman (2011) 320.

dealing with two separate variables both of which must be taken into account when comparing the productive capacities of various nomes.

The surviving evidence does not permit us to calculate or estimate the amount of marginal land in each nome, but as Monson has pointed out in his recent monograph on the economy of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, the data collected by the Egyptian Ministry of Finance during the early years of the twentieth century may be used to obtain a rough idea of conditions prevailing in the Graeco-Roman period, on the assumption that various projects which were undertaken in the nineteenth century, such as the construction of a solid retaining dike along the Nile by Muhammed Ali, impacted all regions concerned more or less equally.⁴⁹

With regard to soil productivity Bowman writes: “Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to be certain what average yields were, although there is no doubt that by ancient standards they were very high”.⁵⁰ Other scholars have drawn attention to the fact that many documents from the Fayum refer to crop rotation, which can be seen as a way of obtaining high yields in an area which was not inundated each year with fresh silt.⁵¹ While all these sceptical observations are correct, here too at least some progress can be achieved by using data which were collected during the twentieth century. For the purposes of this study I have used statistical evidence for wheat yields which was collected in 1953 and analysed by Paul Pissot in an article which appeared in 1955. If we move from north to south, the figures for Upper Egypt look as follows: 1. Giza: 6.04 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,157 kg/ha); 2. Fayum: 5.39 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,925 kg/ha); 3. Beni-Suef: 7.05 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,518 kg/ha); 4. Minya: 8.01 *ardebs* per

⁴⁹ Monson (2012) 51, based on data collected in the *Annuaire statistique de l'Égypte* (Cairo 1911), which reflect conditions between 1895 and 1910. The figures for Upper Egypt and the Fayum are as follows: 1. Giza: 10% marginal; 2. Fayum: 18%; 3. Beni Suef: 16%; 4. Minya: 7%; 5. Asyut: 2%; 6. Girga/Sohag: 1%; 7. Qena: 5%; 8. Aswan: 12%. For a good discussion of the methodological problems raised by attempts to use early twentieth century data to reconstruct ancient patterns, see Monson (2012) 49-54. In the fourth century AD the Oxyrhynchite nome had c. 557 km² of grain land (Bowman 2011, 339). If 10% of the territory (80 km²) was used to grow other crops (*ibid.*), c. 20% (163 km²) of all productive land in the nome would have been marginal. This comes close to the proportion of marginal land in the province of Beni Suef during the early years of the twentieth century (16%). For the Nile Valley and the Fayum Bowman (2011) operates with a simplified model in which 90% of all land was used to grow grain or other crops.

⁵⁰ Bowman (1996) 18.

⁵¹ Bagnall (1993) 116. However, as noted by Rowlandson (1996) 247, yields on the Appianus estate, which was situated near Theadelphia, averaged 11.5 *artabas* per *aroura*, which is not very impressive by Egyptian standards.

feddan (2,861 kg/ha); 5. Asyut: 7.15 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,554 kg/ha); 6. Girga (Sohag): 5.61 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,004 kg/ha); 7. Qena: 4.63 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,654 kg/ha); 8. Aswan: 4.09 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,461 kg/ha).⁵²

The fact that these data refer to a period when the use of chemical fertilisers had become commonplace in Egypt might be thought to make them unsuitable for an analysis of regional variations in soil productivity in Roman times, but this hypothetical counterargument does not hold water. As various experts in the field of Egyptian agricultural history have noted, during the first half of the twentieth century the main effect of applying chemical fertilisers was to boost aggregate yields rather than to distort regional variations in soil productivity.⁵³ In other words, if wheat yields in a particular province of mid-twentieth-century Egypt were X per cent higher than in another province, they are also likely to have been approximately X per cent higher during the first-to-third centuries AD, regardless of any differences in absolute yield levels caused by the use of chemical fertilisers.

Building on these assumptions, our estimates for nome sizes may be converted into 'weighed nome sizes' by equating the proportion of cultivated land in each nome with the amount of non-marginal land.⁵⁴ For instance, if a particular nome had 500 km² of productive land of which 10 % was marginal, the amount of cultivated land is obtained by using a multiplier of 0.9, producing an estimate of 450 km². In addition to this I have assigned 'relative fertility scores' to the nomes of Upper Egypt. These scores are based on an artificial baseline yield of 5 *ardebs* (990 litres) per *feddan* (4,200 m²). In practical terms this means that a region where wheat yields averaged 4 *ardebs* per *feddan* in 1953 gets a score of 0.8, whereas regions where yields averaged 5 *ardebs* or 6 *ardebs* per *feddan* are assigned scores of 1.0 and 1.2 respectively.⁵⁵ As I have already

⁵² Pissot (1955) 15.

⁵³ Hamdan (1961) 128, followed by Monson (2012) 51.

⁵⁴ Cf. Monson (2012) 37.

⁵⁵ In the 1930s Egyptian sowing rates for wheat varied from 62.5 kg per *feddan* (4,200 m²) to 75 kg per *feddan* (Diamantis 1939, 360), corresponding to 196-236 litres per hectare. Based on these figures the seed/yield ratios implied by a yield of 5 *ardebs* per *feddan* range from 1:10 to 1:12, the modern *ardeb* containing 198 litres and weighing 150 kg. In Roman Egypt the standard sowing rate for wheat appears to have been one *artaba* per *aroura*, corresponding to 141 litres per hectare (e.g. Bowman 2013). For the early nineteenth century *DE* reports a sowing rate of half an *ardeb* (92.5 litres) per *feddan* (5,929 m²) for the Nile valley (cf. Toussoun 1926-1928, 225-228 for the size of the *feddan* in this

explained, the applicability of these relative scores does not depend on absolute levels of soil productivity.

Table 1 shows the relationship between ‘weighed nome sizes’ and estimated sizes of nome capitals (plus the city of Antinoopolis).

TABLE 1 – Nome sizes and city sizes in Upper Egypt⁵⁶

	nome size (km ²)	city size (ha)	cultivation score	fertility score	weighed territory (km ² *)	territory : city ratio (km ² */ha)
Aphroditopolis	200	?	0.84	1.208	203	?
Arsinoe	1,500	260	0.82	1.078	1,326	5.1
Herakleopolis	750	?144	0.84	1.41	888	?6.17
Nilopolis	200	?	0.84	1.41	237	?
Oxyrhynchus	800	125	0.84	1.41	948	7.58
Kynopolis	220	?	0.84	1.41	261	?
Hermopolis + Antinoopolis	1,412	160- 175 + 125 = 285-300	0.93	1.602	2,104	12.02/13.15 7.38
Lykopolis	250	75	0.98	1.43	350	4.67
Apollonopolis H	319	45	0.98	1.43	447	9.93
Hypsele	125	30	0.98	1.43	175	5.83
Antaiopolis	418	?	0.98	1.43	586	?
Panopolis	575	?75	0.99	1.122	633	?8.44
Ptolemais	613	?	0.99	1.112	675	?
Diospolis Prv	306	?	0.95	0.926	269	?
Tentyris	300	60	0.95	0.926	264	4.4

period), rates of between half an *ardeb* and two thirds of an *ardeb* per *feddan* for the Fayum and the Delta, and wheat yields of between 5 and 6 *ardebs* per *feddan* for Egypt as a whole (DE, *Antiquités, Mémoires*, vol. IV, p. 102, and *État moderne*, vol. II, p. 515-516, conveniently summarised by Audebeau 1919, 140). The sowing rate of half an *ardeb* per *feddan* (156 litres per hectare) is only marginally higher than the ancient rate.

⁵⁶ The archaeological evidence for city sizes is collected and discussed in Appendices 1 and 2 at the end of this article. Estimates of nome sizes in Upper Egypt are based on Butzer (1976) and Bagnall (1993) 333-335, taking into account the modifications made in this article. Those for Lower Egypt have been calculated on the basis of the hypothetical nome boundaries discussed in Appendices 3 and 4. My reconstruction of the western boundary of the cultivated area in the western Delta is based on Fig. 5.6 in Trampier (2014).

	nome size (km ²)	city size (ha)	cultivation score	fertility score	weighed territory (km ² *)	territory : city ratio (km ² */ha)
Koptos	331	85	0.95	0.926	291	3.42
Thebes	284	?	0.95	0.926	250	?
Hermonthis	120	30	0.95	0.926	106	3.53
Latopolis	125	25	0.95	0.926	110	4.4
Apollonopolis M	157	30	0.88	0.818	113	3.77
Omboi	52	10	0.88	0.818	37	3.7
TOTAL	9,357					

Needless to say, there are strong reasons to proceed very cautiously in trying to elicit any conclusions from this list. Even the best attempt to collect city size data from the existing literature cannot compensate for the poor quality of some of the archaeological evidence, and as Bagnall has pointed out, we cannot always be certain that urban areas which were ‘built-up’ during the first three centuries AD were continuously inhabited during that period.⁵⁷ As I have already explained, the fact that all nome boundaries are at least to some extent hypothetical adds another layer of uncertainty. Despite these caveats the imperfect data which are shown in Table 1 suggest some patterns which are unlikely to be entirely coincidental.

One of the regularities which seems to emerge from the Upper-Egyptian evidence is that *metropoleis* of small nomes were *relatively* large. A glance at the list shows that for the vast majority of nome capitals the ratio between (weighed) nome size and city size varied from 3.5 to 6, meaning that the nomes in question had between 3.5 km² and 6 km² of (weighed) cultivated territory for each hectare of built-up urban space. Strikingly, however, seven nomes whose scores belong to the lower half of this range (3.5–4.75 km²/ha) had nome territories of between 52 km² and 331 km² and adjusted nome territories of between 37 km² and 350 km². While the absolute sizes of the *metropoleis* of these nomes vary from 10 ha to 85 ha, even the tiny *metropolis* of Omboi was *relatively* large compared to the size of its administrative hinterland.⁵⁸ The explanation must be that, with

⁵⁷ Bagnall (1993) 52.

⁵⁸ In addition to the nome capital the Ombite nome included two ‘non-official’ cities, Syene and Elephantine, which occupied areas of 16 ha and 4 ha respectively (Seidlmayer 1999, 153; von Pilgrim & Müller 2014, 23, Fig. 1; and Kaiser 2005, 288, Fig. 34), but Syene’s population included an auxiliary cohort of 500 men which was sustained by

the exception of the tiny Ombites, all of the small nomes of Upper-Egypt appear to have had at least one settlement belonging to the 25-30 ha range which could be used as a nome capital. While a nome capital of this size paled into insignificance compared to large cities such as Hermopolis and Oxyrhynchus, it would have been sufficiently large to produce a low territory-to-city size ratio.

The examples of Hypsele and Apollonopolis Heptakomias call attention to the possible relevance of another factor. As we have seen, the Hypselite nome was detached from the Lykopolite nome in the mid-second century AD. In the long run this might have had the effect of enlarging the pool of resources from which the city of Hypsele was sustained, but in the short term the impact on the new *metropolis* must have been limited, if only because most members of the land-owning elite must have continued to reside at Lykopolis. Similarly, when Apollonopolis became the new *metropolis* of the former Aphroditopolite nome under Trajan, it cannot have acquired the social and economic profile, or the size, of a nome capital overnight. In short, the fact that both Hypsele and Apollonopolis Heptakomias were not raised to metropolitan status before the second century AD may help to explain why they remained relatively small compared to the economic potential of their territories.

The ratios for those Upper-Egyptian nomes which contained more than 500 km² of productive land are all higher than 5 km² of weighed cultivated territory per hectare of built-up urban space. The highest score of all is that for the Hermopolite nome, which had 13.15 (or 12.02) km² of adjusted cultivated land per hectare of built-up urban space before the foundation of Antinoopolis. At first sight this might seem to indicate that the ratio between the amount of cultivated land and the size of the built-up urban area goes up with increasing nome size. In other words, larger nomes seem to have had *relatively* small nome capitals. While I strongly believe that this inference is basically correct, the striking difference in size which can be observed between Arsinoe (260 ha) and Hermopolis (160-175 ha) gives rise to some further reflections. As can be seen from Table 1, the territories of these two cities were roughly comparable in size, with the important caveat that soil productivity in the Hermopolites was much higher than in the Fayum. Despite this difference, Arsinoe appears to have been the largest of the two *metropoleis*. How do we explain this discrepancy?

supplies imported from other parts of Egypt (e.g. Dijkstra 2007). Bowman (2011, 178) vastly overestimates Syene's importance by crediting it with a built-up area of 150 ha.

The only convincing explanation that springs to mind has to do with the existence of an important difference in the social (and economic) make-up of the populations of the Arsinoite and Hermopolite nomes. Based on an analysis of a petition submitted by the cavalry settlers of the Arsinoite nome in 137 BC (*P.Lips.* 124), Andrew Monson has argued that the settlers of the Fayum were responsible for 23 % for the tax burden imposed on the *katoikoi hippeis* of Ptolemaic Egypt except those settled in the Thebaid.⁵⁹ At the same time a tax-register of the third century BC shows that before the battle of Raphia the cavalry settlers occupied between 20% and 25% of the entire cultivable area of the Arsinoite nome.⁶⁰ Before Raphia infantry cleruchs appear to have been rare, but there can be no doubt that this category became quite numerous during the second century BC. On this basis Fischer-Bovet has argued that by the time of the Roman conquest the proportion of cleruchic land in the Fayum might have been as high as 25% or 30%. During the Ptolemaic period many cleruchs were also settled in the neighbouring Herakleopolite and Oxyrhynchite nomes, where the proportion of cleruchic lands might have been as high as 20%.⁶¹

Right from the start of the Ptolemaic period many *katoikoi*/cleruchs had opted for urban residence, and this tendency became even more pronounced after Augustus had defined the citizens of the *metropoleis* as a hereditary and privileged class.⁶² It can therefore be argued that the presence, within a particular nome, of a substantial group of people holding sizeable plots of cleruchic land tended to be associated with a higher-than-average regional urbanisation rate, mainly because the existence of such a group meant that a larger proportion of agricultural revenues was channeled off to cities (rather than to the imperial treasury).⁶³ It would then follow that the main reason why Arsinoe was bigger than Hermopolis was because the former city had a larger land-owning elite which received larger amounts of revenue from its privately owned properties.

⁵⁹ Monson (2012) 179-181.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 89.

⁶¹ Fischer-Bovet (2014) 204 and 209.

⁶² Bowman & Rathbone (1992); Monson (2012) 265-268.

⁶³ Note that this hypothesis sees the existence of many privately owned allotments owned or otherwise controlled by city-dwellers rather than the amount of 'private land' (however defined) as such as an important variable. Holders of cleruchic land also paid taxes, but they did so at a lower rate than holders of public land.

Building on these observations, it is possible to provide estimates for the areas occupied by those Upper-Egyptian cities for which no archaeological evidence is available. If we start with Aphroditopolis in the north and end with Thebes in the south, we obtain the following list.

TABLE 2 — Size estimates for Upper-Egyptian cities for which no archaeological data are available

1. Aphroditopolis: small nome; old nome capital; not much cleruchic land; terr./size ratio = average of those for Lykopolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Latopolis and Apollonopolis Magna (4.13). Size estimate: 50 ha (49.2 ha).
2. Nilopolis: small nome; young nome capital; some cleruchic land; comparable to Hermonthis and Hypsele. Size estimate: 30 ha.
3. Kynopolis: small nome; old nome capital; some cleruchic land; terr./size ratio = average of those for Lykopolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Latopolis and Apollonopolis Magna (4.13). Size estimate: 65 ha (63.2 ha).
4. Antaiopolis: medium-sized nome; old nome capital; not much cleruchic land; terr./size ratio higher than for Oxyrhynchus, perhaps 8.5. Size estimate: 70 ha (68.9 ha).
5. Ptolemais: large nome; old nome capital (early-Ptolemaic) with large group of city-based land-owners;⁶⁴ terr./size ratio = average of those for Arsinoe, Herakleopolis and Oxyrhynchus (6.28). Size estimate: 110 ha (107.5 ha).
6. Diospolis Parva: small nome; old nome capital; not much cleruchic land; terr./size ratio = average of those for Lykopolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Latopolis and Apollonopolis Magna (4.13). Size estimate: 65 ha (65.1 ha)
7. Thebes: small nome; old nome capital; not much cleruchic land; terr./size ratio = average of those for Lykopolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Latopolis and Apollonopolis Magna (4.13). Size estimate: 60 ha (60.5 ha).

Of the seven estimates contained in this list, only that for Ptolemais calls for comments. In an often-quoted passage Strabo (17.1.42) claims that Ptolemais was the largest city of the Thebaid and that it equalled Memphis in size. The first of these statements might be thought to be incompatible with my estimate for Hermopolis (160-175 ha), which is much higher

⁶⁴ As noted by Vandorpe (2010) 303-304, few soldiers of the cleruchic type are recorded in Upper Egypt. However, as Manning (2010) 110, points out (following Rostovtzeff), soldiers must have accounted for a large proportion of the first settlers of Ptolemais. If these men were not offered the opportunity to lease sizeable plots of (non-cleruchic) land from the state, it is difficult to understand how they and their families could have survived. Given the fragmentary state of the evidence we also have to reckon with the possibility that cleruchic land might have been more common in Upper Egypt than has been inferred from published papyri. For new evidence of cleruchic holdings in an unknown nome of the Thebaid (perhaps the Diospolite Parva), see Clarysse e.a. (2014) 44-47.

than that for Ptolemais. It must, however, be kept in mind that all of my estimates refer to the first half of the third century AD. As the German archaeologist Günther Roeder pointed out almost sixty years ago, it was only during the first centuries of Roman rule that the four quarters of Her-mopolis coalesced into a continuously built-up urban landscape. Throughout this period the pharaonic precinct of Thoth (26 ha), which had been enclosed within huge mud brick walls in the first half of the fourth century BC, remained the most important landmark of the city. Since only a small part of this area was used for habitation, there can be no doubt that even as late as the third century AD the northern half of Roman city was inhabited less densely than the two southern quarters.⁶⁵

Ptolemais had been founded as a Greek city and is likely to have had sanctuaries of the Greek type. Since Greek sanctuaries did not have the economic functions of Egyptian temples, they did not need a lot of space, leaving more room for domestic quarters. From a papyrus of the mid-first century BC referring to the existence of a small suburban quarter occupying the area between the temple of Isis and the city walls it has been deduced that the walled area must have been fully occupied by buildings.⁶⁶ In light of these considerations an estimate of *c.* 110 hectares for early third-century AD Ptolemais is fully compatible with Strabo's positive assessment of this city.

CITY SIZES IN THE EASTERN DELTA

Nowadays the eastern Delta is composed of five governates: Qalyubiya, Daqahliya, Damietta, Sharqiya and Port Said (the northern part of the former Suez Canal Zone).⁶⁷ Since many older publications, including those which have been used in this study, do not provide separate figures for Damietta and the Suez Canal Zone, the eastern Damietta area will be grouped with (northern) Daqahliya, the western Damietta area with (northern) Gharbiya, and the coastal area of the north-eastern Delta with (northern) Sharqiya. If we ignore the western Damietta area, we are thus left with two large regions and one smaller area which had the following

⁶⁵ Roeder (1959) 110. Cf. the section on city size and population.

⁶⁶ *SB* I 3926 (46 BC); cf. Winnicki (1978) 39.

⁶⁷ For the purposes of this contribution the Damietta branch and the Bahr Bisindila (on which see Appendix 3) will be regarded as the western boundaries of the eastern Delta.

proportions of marginal land at the start of the twentieth century: Qalyubiya 8%, Daqahliya 11% and Sharqiya 14%.⁶⁸

While the figure for Qalyubiya is unproblematic, the figures for the other two regions conceal large sub-regional variations, with the proportion of marginal land in the northern districts far exceeding those in the southern areas. In order to obtain a somewhat more realistic picture, the governate of Daqahliya has been sub-divided into three regions (southern, central and coastal) and the administrative district of Sharqiya also into three sub-regions (southern, northern and eastern and coastal).⁶⁹ Exactly the same approach has been followed in the case of the wheat yield figures collected by Pissot, but in this case a sufficient degree of precision can be achieved by dividing the eastern Delta (including Qalyubiya) into five sub-regions.⁷⁰

In the Delta nome sizes are far more difficult to establish than in the Nile Valley. This explains why the Mendesian nome, where the toponymical evidence is much better than in any other part of Lower Egypt, is the only nome of the Delta for which a precise estimate has been provided.⁷¹ At first sight the fact that Ptolemy situates each of the Lower-Egyptian nomes between two of his six Lower-Egyptian Nile branches looks like a promising starting point for an attempt to determine the approximate boundaries of the remaining nomes of the Delta. We are told, for instance,

⁶⁸ Monson (2012) 51. The corresponding figure for the entire province of Gharbiya was 34%.

⁶⁹ My estimates for the proportions of marginal land in these six sub-regions are as follows: southern Daqahliya 5%, central and northern Daqahliya 15%, coastal Daqahliya 50% (because of the extensive wetland zones which existed in Antiquity), southern Sharqiya 5%, northern and eastern Sharqiya 30%, and coastal Sharqiya 80%. In the coastal districts of north-eastern Gharbiya 60% of the productive land might have been marginal. Fig. 2.9B in Stanley & Warne (2007) shows lagoons and large areas of marginal land in those regions corresponding to the Diospolite, Tanite, Mendesian and Nesyt nomes, but the archaeological and papyrological evidence (e.g. Blouin 2014) leaves no doubt that large parts of these nomes had been brought under cultivation by the early third century AD. Since sea level stood about 2 m. below its present level during the first centuries of Roman rule (Stanley & Warne 1993, 632), the coastal districts of the Delta must have been relatively safe from flooding in this period.

⁷⁰ Instead of using the three yield figures given by Pissot (1955) 15 (6.6 *ardebs* per *feddan* for Qalyubiya, 5.44 *ardebs* per *feddan* for Daqahliya, and 5.85 *ardebs* per *feddan* for Sharqiya), I will operate with the following set of figures: Qalyubiya: 6.6 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,357 kg/ha); southern Daqahliya: 5.85 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,089 kg/ha); northern and coastal Daqahliya: 5.05 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,839 kg/ha); southern Sharqiya: 6.25 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,232 kg/ha); northern and coastal Sharqiya: 5.45 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,946 kg/ha). These distinctions mirror those shown on map 24 of Simons (1968), which shows region-specific wheat yields during the period 1959-1963.

⁷¹ Blouin (2014).



Fig. 1 — Hypothetical nome boundaries in Lower Egypt, c. AD 235

that the Athribitic and Sebennytyc nomes were situated between the Athribitic and Busiritic branches of the Nile, and the Nesyt and Pharbaithite nomes between the Busiritic and Bubastic branches (Ptol. 4.5.22-23). In my view, the approximate trajectories of five of Ptolemy's six Nile branches can be determined with a reasonable degree of certainty, but a careful examination of the evidence suggests that the Busiritic branch may never have existed in the form in which it is described by Ptolemy (cf. Appendix 3). In all likelihood the Leontopolite and Bubastite nomes of the early Roman period were separated by the old Tanitic branch (which had been reduced to a minor river course in Roman times) rather than by Ptolemy's 'Busiritic river'. Similarly, it seems doubtful that the Busiritic branch separated the Mendesian nome from the Tanite nome. More likely the boundary between these two nomes ran through the Daqahliya depression (medieval Lake Zar), which was flooded for eight to nine months of the year.⁷²

⁷² Cooper (2014) 80-85.

As the examples just given show, the likelihood that at least of some of the information provided by Ptolemy cannot be relied upon does not necessarily make it impossible to establish the approximate boundaries of most of the twenty-eight nomes which appear to have existed in Lower Egypt during the first half of the third century AD. At the same time we must accept that a precise reconstruction of these administrative divisions cannot be achieved.⁷³ In order to signal that we are dealing with very rough approximations, all of my estimates (with the exception of that for the tiny Sethroite nome) have been rounded to multiples of fifty.

Table 3 lists my estimates for the approximate sizes of the nomes of the eastern Delta, the regional data relating to amounts of marginal land and soil productivity and my estimates for those 'official' cities for which sufficient archaeological evidence is available.⁷⁴

TABLE 3 – Nome sizes and city sizes in the eastern Delta

city	nome size (km ²)	city size (ha)	cultivation score	fertility score	weighed territory (km ² *)	territory : city ratio (km ² */ha)
Thmuis-Mendes	1,500	120	0.85	1.01	1,288	10.73
Leontopolis	1,050	?	0.95	1.25	1,247	?
Diospolis Inf.	550	30	0.40	0.97	213	7.1
Panephris	600	?	0.50	1.01	303	?
Pharbatos	350	?	0.70	1.09	267	?
Bubastis	450	70	0.90	1.25	506	7.23
Tanis	1,100	90	0.70	1.09	839	9.32
Phakusa	300	?	0.70	1.09	229	?
Pelusium	300	130	0.20	1.09	65	0.5
Sethroë	175	30	0.70	1.01	124	4.1
Athribis	950	120	0.90	1.25	1,069	8.91
Heliopolis	300	?	0.92	1.32	364	?
extra-terr.	?500		0.30			
TOTAL	7,825					

⁷³ Another complicating factor is that Lakes Idku, Burullus and Manzala were much larger in Antiquity than they are today. My estimates assume that during the first half of the third century AD these lakes were about as large as they appear on map 74 of the *Bar- rington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*.

⁷⁴ Thanks are owed to Bart Noordervliet for calculating all the nome sizes listed in Tables 3 and 5 using a geo-referenced version of the map shown in Figure 1.

The pattern revealed by these data does not differ dramatically from that which we have encountered in the Nile Valley, with the largest nome of the eastern Delta displaying the highest ratio between weighed territory and city size and several medium-sized nomes showing significantly lower scores. Another interesting feature of the list is that the nome capitals of the Sethroite and Diospolite nomes seem to have been of similar size, although the latter nome was certainly much larger, both in absolute terms and in terms of adjusted territory. The explanation must be that Diospolis Inferior was raised to metropolitan status at a relatively late moment in its history, perhaps as late as the first decade of the second century AD,⁷⁵ whereas Sethroe is attested as a nome capital from the third century BC. The relevance of this distinction has already been discussed with regard to Apollonopolis Heptakomias in the Nile Valley.

Of all the cities of the eastern Delta Pelusium, which was strictly speaking not a nome capital, has the lowest score. The only possible conclusion is that the size of this particular city reflects its role as a major port city for trade between Egypt and the Levant rather than the productive capacity of its rural territory. In other words, while the method used in this contribution assumes that most Egyptian cities were sustained by the food resources of their immediate hinterlands, it also helps us to identify cities which managed to escape from this economic logic.

As a final step, the sizes of those cities for which no good evidence is available can be estimated using the same method as in the case of the cities of the Nile Valley. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 – Size estimates for cities in the eastern Delta
for which no archaeological data are available

1. Leontopolis: large nome; old nome capital; terr./size ratio = average of those for Thmuis and Tanis (9.61). Size estimate: 110 ha (109.3 ha).
2. Panephyssis: medium-sized nome; old nome capital (?); terr./size ratio higher than that for Bubastis, e.g. 8.0. Size estimate: 40 ha (37.9 ha).
3. Pharbaitos: small nome; old nome capital; terr./size ratio = average of those for Lykopolis, Tentyris, Koptos, Latopolis and Apollonopolis Magna (4.13). Size estimate: 65 ha (64.6 ha)

⁷⁵ Geissen & Weber (2007) 284-285.

4. Phakusa: small nome; young nome capital.⁷⁶ Size estimate: 30 ha.
5. Heliopolis: small nome; old nome capital; terr./size ratio comparable to that for Lykopolis in the Nile Valley (4.67). Size estimate: 80 ha (77.9 ha).⁷⁷

CITY SIZES IN THE WESTERN DELTA

At the time of the Napoleonic expedition the western Delta consisted of four provinces: Minufiya, Gharbiya, Buhaira and Rosetta. While the second of these provinces occupied a much larger area than its modern namesake, the eastern part of the old province of Rosetta now belongs to the governate of Kafr el-Sheikh.

The early-twentieth century data relating to region-specific proportions of marginal land distinguish between three areas: Minufiya, with only 1% of marginal land, Gharbiya, with 34% of marginal land, and Buhaira, where 28% of the productive land was marginal. Like the figures for Daqahliya and Sharqiya in the eastern Delta (cf. above) those for Gharbiya and Buhaira conceal large differences between the southern, central and northern districts. Therefore I will operate with a larger set of figures which distinguishes between eight sub-regions.⁷⁸

In his article on wheat yields Pissot distinguishes between four sub-regions of the western Delta: Minufiya, Gharbiya, Fuadiya (modern Kafr el Sheikh, corresponding to the northern part of the old province of Gharbiya and the eastern part of the old province of Rosetta) and Buhaira. In

⁷⁶ Geissen & Weber (2008) 278-279.

⁷⁷ Strabo's claim (17.1.27) that Heliopolis was "deserted" might have been inspired by the huge discrepancy in size between the Roman city and its pharaonic predecessor which one scholar has credited with a built-up area of 2,300 hectares (Uphill 2001, 47).

⁷⁸ Monson (2012) 51. My cultivation scores for the western Delta are based on the following estimates for sub-regional proportions of marginal land: southern Gharbiya 20%, central Gharbiya 30%; north-western Gharbiya 40%, north-eastern Gharbiya (ancient Sebennytes) 45%; far north-eastern Gharbiya (ancient Diospolites) 60%; eastern Buhaira 20%, central-southern Buhaira 30%, north-western Buhaira (ancient Metelites) 50%. For the ancient Phthemphuthi nome, which included land belonging to the provinces of Minufiya and Gharbiya, the proportion of marginal land has been set at 10%. Fig. 2.9B in Stanley & Warne (2007) shows huge areas of marginal land in those regions corresponding to the Metelite, Sebennytic and Lower Sebennytic nomes of the second and third centuries AD and to a lesser extent also in those corresponding to the Phthenethu, Xoite and Kabasite nomes, but the steep increase in site numbers which can be observed in the Phthenethu and Lower Sebennytic nomes between the early first and early seventh centuries AD (Wilson 2012e) shows that many of the wetlands were drained in the Roman period. In the Hermopolite Parva nome the settlement zone extended as far as the modern El Hagar canal (Wilson 2012a, Fig. 3; Trampier e.a. 2013, 220, Fig. 1).

the case of Buhaira I will operate with a distinction between the eastern and north-western districts, where wheat yields were high, and the rest of the province, where they were substantially lower. For the region corresponding to the ancient Phthemphuthi nome I will use the average of the yield figures for Minufiya and Gharbiya.⁷⁹

The task of reconstructing nome boundaries in the western Delta is even more challenging than in the case of the eastern Delta, but a recent article by Dhennin has cleared away some of the seemingly insuperable difficulties surrounding the relative positions of the Prosopites, the Phthemphuthi nome and the Onuphites.⁸⁰ If his findings are combined with older information, it becomes difficult to avoid the conclusion that the first and second of these nomes were bounded by the Canopic branch (Ptolemy's Agathodaimon) and by the Athribitic branch, despite Ptolemy's claim that the Prosopites was situated between the Canopic and Thermuthiac rivers and the Phthemphuthi nome between the Thermuthiac and Athribitic branches. The Onuphite nome appears to have been situated between the eastern half of the Phthemphuthi nome and the Xoites (cf. Fig. 1 and Appendix 4).

The boundaries of the remaining nomes of the western Delta present fewer problems, but that does not mean that we can locate them precisely on a modern map. In most cases we have absolutely no idea where the northern or southern boundary of a particular nome might have run. This problem has been 'solved' by arbitrarily assuming that the northern and southern dividing lines between adjacent nomes ran exactly half-way between their nome capitals. As in the case of the nomes of the eastern Delta, I have tried to highlight the provisional status of my estimates for the sizes of the nomes of the western Delta by presenting them as multiples of 50.

Table 5 shows the relationships between city sizes and 'weighed' nome sizes in the western Delta.

⁷⁹ Pissot (1955) 15, gives the following yield figures for the western Delta: Minufiya, 6.54 *ardebs* per *feddan* (2,304 kg/ha); Gharbiya, 5.25 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,875 kg/ha); Fuadiya, 4.15 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,482 kg/ha); and Buhaira, 4.25 *ardebs* per *feddan* (1,518 kg/ha). My fertility score for central-southern and north-western Buhaira is based on a yield of 4.65 *ardebs* per *feddan*, and that for the rest of the province on a yield of 3.85 *ardebs* per *feddan*. The wheat yield for the Pthemphuthi has been set at 5.90 *ardebs* per *feddan*. Like the intra-regional distinctions which have been made in the case of the eastern Delta, those used in this section are based on map 24 in Simons (1968).

⁸⁰ Dhennin (2016).

TABLE 5 — Nome sizes and city sizes in the western Delta

city	nome size (km ²)	city size (ha)	cultivation score	fertility score	weighed territory (km ² *)	territory : city ratio (km ² */ha)
Alexandria	—	972	—	—	—	—
Marea	850	??20	0.2	0.93	158	??7.9
Schedia	350	?120	0.5	0.93	116	2.92
Hermopolis P	500	?	0.7	0.77	270	?
Andropolis	400	?35	0.8	0.93	298	?8.51
Metelis	750	?	0.5	0.93	349	?
Buto	1,150	45	0.6	0.83	573	12.73
Kabasa	300	?	0.7	0.83	125	?
Sais	1,050	?50	0.8	1.05	882	?17.64
+ Naukratis		+40 = 90				?9.8
Pachnamunis	550	25	0.4	0.83	183	7.32
Xois	650	33.6	0.7	0.83	378	11.25
Busiris	550	?50	0.8	1.05	462	?9.24
Sebennytyus	1,200	50	0.55	0.83	548	10.96
Taua	600	?	0.9	1.18	637	?
Onuphis	450	?	0.8	1.05	378	?
Nikiou	1,050	100	0.99	1.31	1,362	13.62
Letopolis	300	?	0.9	1.21	327	?
Memphis	300	?	0.9	1.21	327	?
Extra-territorial	?800		0.3			
TOTAL	11,800					

Since there are very few reliable city size estimates for the western Delta, and also because approximate nome sizes are more difficult to establish in this area than in the eastern Delta, any attempt to discern region-specific patterns in territory/city size ratios must be regarded as problematic.

Three large nomes of the western Delta, the Prosopites (nome capital Nikiou), the Phthenethu nome (nome capital Buto) and the Sebennytyc nome, display high territory-to-city size ratios. The fourth-largest nome of the region, the Saites, scores perceptibly lower than any of these nomes.

If these differences are real, they might be attributed to the fact that the Saite nome had two major cities, Sais and Naukratis. Unfortunately, the uncertainties surrounding my estimates for Sais and Naukratis make it impossible to draw any firm conclusions on this point.

The only medium-sized nomes of the western Delta for which territory/city size scores can be calculated are the Xoite and Lower Sebennyitic nomes (nome capitals Xoïs and Pachnamunis). If my estimates for the amounts of marginal land can be relied upon, the former nome contained more than twice as much cultivable land as its northern neighbour. Yet the city of Xoïs does not seem to have been much larger than Pachnamunis. Like the *metropoleis* of various other small nomes, the latter city might have been *relatively* large because capitals of small nomes rarely occupied areas smaller than 25 hectares.

The scores for some of the large and medium-sized nomes of the western Delta are higher than those which have been calculated for the Mendesian, Tanite, Athribite and Bubastite nomes. Since this discrepancy seems to be replicated within the western Delta, where the Sebennyitic nome displays a lower score than the Phthenethu and the Busirites a lower score than the Xoites, it might be speculated that this pattern reflects region-specific concentrations of land owned by Alexandrian landowners, with relative proportions of land owned by Alexandrians gradually falling off with increasing distance from the provincial capital.⁸¹ However, as in the case of the Saïtes, the uncertainties surrounding all or most of those estimates which have been fed into my calculations make it hazardous to draw far-reaching conclusions from minor differences in territory/city size ratios.⁸²

As Table 5 shows, Alexandria (972 ha) was more than three-and-a-half times larger than the second-largest city of Roman Egypt (Arsinoë in the Fayum). During the first-to-third centuries AD Alexandria controlled only a tiny amount of territory in the immediate vicinity of the city. However, since Alexandrian landowners owned or leased large amounts of land in

⁸¹ Recent discussions of Alexandrian landownership include Rowlandson (1996) 106-107; Sharp (1999) 218; Capponi (2004) and Tacoma (2006) 145-147. A famous provision of the Edict of Tiberius Iulius Alexander (*OGIS* 669, lines 59-61), in which "the old land" owned or leased in the *Alexandreōn chōrā* or in the Menelaïte nome is excluded from the land survey that formed the basis of taxation, points to a concentration of Alexandrian land in the north-western Delta.

⁸² If Roman-period Buto occupied 60 ha instead of 45 ha, the territory/city size ratio for the Phthenethu nome would drop to 9.55, thereby closing the gap with the score for the Tanites.

the Delta as well as smaller amounts in the Fayum and the Nile Valley, the city could actually draw on a larger pool of agricultural resources than any other Egyptian city. In addition to this Alexandria played an important role in trade between Egypt and other parts of the Mediterranean and in commercial exchange between the Roman empire and India. Some of the profits from such commercial activities might have been used to sustain part of the urban population.

Schedia/Menelaus was at least eight times smaller than Alexandria but probably still too big to be sustained from its small territory.⁸³ The main reason why Schedia developed into a large settlement was because the canal between the Canopic branch and Alexandria was not suitable for ordinary Nile vessels. Therefore all cargoes, including Egyptian grain, had to be unloaded at Schedia and to be put on board of shallower canal boats for the continuation of the trip to Alexandria. Because of its pivotal position in the transportation network of the north-western Delta, Schedia also was the station from which the Nile boats of the *praefectus Aegypti* undertook their annual inspection tours of Egypt.⁸⁴

Seven nome capitals of the western Delta have produced no archaeological evidence from which size estimates for the Roman period can be deduced. In the case of Metelis even the whereabouts of the city remain disputed, with Kom al-Ahmer and Kom al-Ghoraf representing the most important (but not the only) contenders. If we use the same method as in the previous two sections while adding proximity to Alexandria as a region-specific determinant of city size, we obtain the results which are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6 — Size estimates for cities in the western Delta
for which no archaeological data are available

1. Hermopolis Parva: medium-sized nome with large amounts of Alexandrian land; relatively young nome capital, but older than Hypsele and Apollonopolis Heptakomias in the Nile valley (Julio-Claudian period). Size estimate: 35 ha.
2. Metelis: large nome with large amounts of marginal land and a large proportion of Alexandrian land; relatively young nome capital (Julio-Claudian); significantly larger than Diospolis Inferior? Size estimate: 40 ha.
3. Kabasa: small nome; relatively young nome capital (Julio-Claudian); comparable to Phakusa? Size estimate: 30 ha.

⁸³ This conclusion imposes itself less strongly if the settlement area was *c.* 75 ha rather than *c.* 120 ha. See Appendix 2a for detailed discussion.

⁸⁴ Bergmann & Heinzlmann (2007)

4. Taua: medium-sized nome; old nome capital (early-Ptolemaic?); territory/city size ratio higher than that for Bubastis, e.g. 8. Size estimate: 80 ha (79.6 ha). If Taua replaced Tantatho/Tanta as the nome capital in the first or early second century AD (cf. Appendix 2a), the former city might have occupied an area of between 35 ha and 45 ha. Cf. the case of Apollonopolis Heptakomias in the Nile Valley and that of Andropolis in the western Delta.
5. Onuphis: medium-sized nome; old nome capital; terr./size ratio comparable to that for Bubastis (7.23). Size estimate: 50 ha (52.3 ha).
6. Letopolis: small nome; old nome capital; terr./size ratio comparable to that for Lykopolis in the Nile Valley (4.67). Size estimate: 70 ha.
7. Memphis: second-largest city of Egypt after Alexandria according to Strabo 17.1.32; comparable to Athribis (120 ha), Oxyrhynchus (125 ha) and Thmuis (120 ha) according to Ammian 22.16.6. On this basis early-third century AD Memphis may be credited with a built-up area of 125 ha, and the Memphite nome with a territory/city size ratio of 2.62, implying that the city continued to be sustained by *syntaxis* payments and/or by revenues originating from state-owned land leased by Memphite temples.⁸⁵

CITY SIZE DISTRIBUTION IN ROMAN EGYPT

One way of analysing regional urban systems is to look at the shape of a (doubly logarithmic) graph showing the relationship between city ranks and city sizes.⁸⁶ The vast literature on this topic distinguishes between four different types of urban systems: 1. systems whose rank-size distribution obeys the 'rank-size rule', meaning that the population of the largest city is twice as large as that of the second-largest city, three times larger than that of the third-largest city, etc.; the rank-size graph for such a system appears as a straight line with a slope of exactly minus one; 2. 'primate' systems in which the largest city is many times larger than the second-largest city and dominates the entire urban system; 3. urban systems in which the largest cities are smaller than predicted by the rank-size rule and in which there are far more medium-sized cities than in a system obeying this rule; and finally 4. urban systems in which there are far more medium-sized cities than in a system obeying the rank-size rule but also a primate city. From a mathematical point of view the third and fourth types ought to be referred to as 'concave' and 'primo-concave' respectively, and this terminology is used in most publications written by

⁸⁵ Thompson (2012) 72; cf. Monson (2012) 136-141, for a good discussion of 'temple land' during the first three centuries of Roman rule.

⁸⁶ For a convenient synopsis of various types of rank-size analysis see Falconer & Savage (1995).

economists or economic geographers, but in the archaeological literature the somewhat misleading terms ‘convex’ and ‘primo-convex’ are preferred.⁸⁷

In the case of Egypt, there are no reliable population figures for the vast majority of cities, but since there are strong reasons to think that the size of urban populations correlated with the size of built-up areas (cf. below), the size estimates collected or calculated in this contribution may be used as proxies for urban populations. If these data are plotted in a doubly logarithmic graph, we obtain the pattern which is shown in Figure 2.

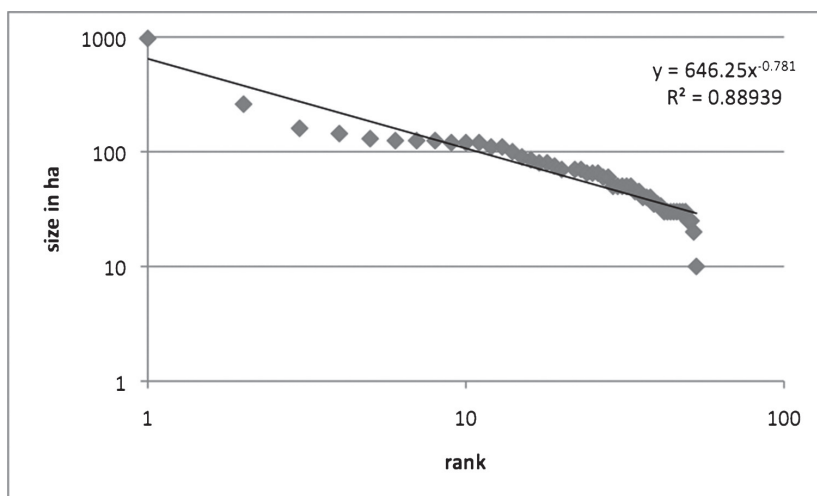


Fig. 2 — Rank-size distribution of cities in Roman Egypt, c. AD 235

The shape of the graph leaves no doubt that we are dealing with a primo-concave (or primo-convex) system comprising a few large cities (80-260 ha), a much larger number of medium-sized and small cities (20-80 ha) and one primate city which dominated the entire system. As demonstrated in the foregoing sections, most of the considerable differences in size which can be observed within these two bands can be attributed to differences in the sizes of administrative territories and/or to variations in soil productivity.

⁸⁷ For this terminological confusion see de Ligt (2016) 33. In mathematics a function defined on an interval is called concave if the line segment between any two points on the graph of the function lies below or on the graph.

In brief, while some of the nome capitals of Roman Egypt were undoubtedly much larger than many other 'official' cities, making it possible to speak of an 'urban hierarchy', most of the differences in city size which emerge from the archaeological record ultimately reflect political and administrative decisions which were taken in various periods of Egyptian history.

Apart from Alexandria, only a handful of 'official' cities managed to outgrow the carrying capacity of their administrative districts. Among those cities which certainly belonged to this group, or are likely to have belonged to it, Pelusium flourished as an entrepôt for trade between Egypt and the Levant and Schedia/Menelaus as a feeder city of the provincial capital.⁸⁸ Finally, Memphis may have continued to be sustained by various resource flows which had been created or maintained during the late pharaonic and Ptolemaic periods.

FROM CITY SIZE TO POPULATION

Since other scholars have devoted extensive discussions to the few demographic hints supplied by published papyri, there seems little point in repeating their arguments, but it remains worth checking whether the archaeological data and the papyri can be fitted into one coherent picture.

In an article which appeared in 1920 Ulrich Wilcken called attention to a papyrus from Hermopolis Magna from which it appears that in AD 266 or AD 267 there were 1,900 *oikiai* in the West City quarter, and 2,300 *oikiai* in another quarter whose name does not survive but which Wilcken identified as the East City quarter.⁸⁹ Based on evidence collected during a series of archaeological campaigns which were carried out between 1929 and 1939, Roeder endorsed Wilcken's interpretation by pointing out that large parts of the huge precinct of Thoth, which dominated the northern half of the city, appear to have been kept clear of domestic buildings until the fourth century AD, making it unlikely that the (northern) Citadel quarters had the same number of houses as the (southern) City quarters. On

⁸⁸ Outside the area covered by this study the harbour city of Paraetionium, which has been described as "the only reliable haven for mariners between Alexandria and Tobruk" (White 1999, 469), appears to have had a tiny productive territory, making it unlikely that this city was entirely sustained by local food resources.

⁸⁹ Wilcken (1920).

this basis Roeder estimated the total number of *oikiai* in mid-third-century Hermopolis as 7,000.⁹⁰

In principle, the term *oikiai* might refer to ‘houses’ or to ‘households’, but since the papyrus in question deals with an extra-ordinary tax assessment, it seems likely that the latter meaning is intended.⁹¹ Based on the census documents from Roman Egypt, Bagnall and Frier have calculated that urban households comprised 5.3 people on average (including slaves).⁹² Therefore the population of mid third-century Hermopolis can be estimated as 37,100, implying an average urban population density of 212-232 people per hectare.⁹³ Since my estimate for the size of the built-up area (160-175 ha) includes all areas occupied by public or domestic buildings, densities in the domestic quarters of the city would have been much higher.⁹⁴

In his 1920 article Wilcken also discussed a papyrus from Thmuis (datable to the 170s AD) from which it appears that the twentieth quarter (*amphodon*) of the city had at least 178 houses. From this clue he inferred that the city must have had at least 3,560 houses. Recent studies have shown that the number of occupants per Egyptian house fell in the 7.61-7.78 range, but the underlying figures come from cities and villages, and

⁹⁰ Roeder (1959) 107, followed by Bowman (2011) 342-343. Based on a re-assessment of the archaeological evidence, Bailey (2012) 195 confirms Roeder’s conclusion that only a small part of the precinct of Thoth was occupied by private dwellings. In view of the different make-up of the Citadel quarters, the total number of houses in third-century Hermopolis cannot be estimated by doubling the figure for the southern half of the city. For this reason the estimate of 8,468 houses provided by Alston & Alston (1997) 203, must be regarded as too high.

⁹¹ For the meaning of the phrase *kat’oikian* in this document see Bowman (2011) 343. While conceding that the term *oikia* is ambiguous, Bagnall & Frier (1994) 13-14, argue that taxes levied by the Roman authorities normally targeted households rather than houses. But see van Minnen (2002) for the suggestion that the text might refer to a one-off levy payable by homeowners.

⁹² Bagnall & Frier (1994) 68.

⁹³ Starting from the assumption that the report of AD 266/67 refers to a tax on houses, van Minnen (2002) 291-293, estimates the total number of houses as 6,500 and assigns 7 inhabitants to each house. This results in an estimate of c. 45,000 for the urban population, implying a density of 257-281 inhabitants per hectare. However, since the assumption that all of the hypothetical 6,500 houses of mid-third century Hermopolis were fully occupied looks unrealistic (e.g. Bagnall 1993, 52; Alston 2001, 166-167), van Minnen’s interpretation is entirely compatible with a population estimate of c. 40,000 and with an urban population density of 225-250 inhabitants per hectare.

⁹⁴ In a recent publication on Ptolemaic and Roman Naukratis Ross Thomas calculates a density of 304-361 inhabitants per hectare for the domestic quarters and a much lower density of 177-214 people per hectare for the city as a whole (Thomas 2014, 198).

there are some reasons to think that urban houses tended to have fewer occupants than rural ones.⁹⁵ If we operate with a range of 7-7.5 people per urban house, we obtain an estimate of between 24,920 and 26,700 for the population of late-second century Thmuis, implying an urban population density of 208-223 people per hectare.⁹⁶ These figures are slightly lower than those for Hermopolis, but it must be remembered that they depend on a very tentative estimate for the size of the Graeco-Roman city, and also on the debatable assumption that there were only twenty city quarters and that each of these had approximately 178 houses.

Based on the number of *amphoda* which existed in Arsinoe in AD 72/73 and on the number of tax-payers (385) which are reported to have lived in one of these quarters, Rathbone has calculated that the nome capital of the Fayum might have had a total population of over 46,000. Finding this estimate excessively high, he suggests that the actual population is likely to have been much smaller.⁹⁷ Yet the urban population density implied by the existence of 46,000 urban residents is only 177 people per hectare, which looks quite reasonable or even on the low side.

Recent estimates for third-century AD Oxyrhynchus vary from 20,000 to 30,000, implying an urban population density of between 160 and 240 inhabitants per hectare.⁹⁸ As in the case of Hermopolis, however, population densities in the domestic quarters of Oxyrhynchus would have far exceeded the average number of city-dwellers per hectare of built-up urban space.

Based on these figures, it seems reasonable to operate with a range of 200-250 inhabitants per hectare of built-up urban space for Egyptian cities of the first half of the third century AD.⁹⁹ If we combine this range

⁹⁵ Alston (2002) 70-72. Hobson (1985) has argued that the house occupancy rate in late first century AD Philadelphia stood as high as 11.27, but for the reasons set out by van Minnen (1994) 237, this figure should be lowered to 9.2.

⁹⁶ My estimate for Thmuis is very close to those provided by Alston (2001) 163 (24,564 inhabitants) and Tacoma (2006) 41 (at least 25,000). After the Antonine Plague many houses in Thmuis are likely to have been unoccupied. My estimates refer to urban population size immediately before the plague and after the demographic recovery of the third century AD.

⁹⁷ Rathbone (1990) 121; cf. Tacoma (2006) 42. For much lower estimates see Alston (2001) 163 (27,071 in AD 72-3) and Müller (2011) 143 (only 14,070 in AD 200). Worp (2004) surveys the papyrological evidence for town quarters in Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine Egypt.

⁹⁸ Rathbone (1990) 121; Alston (2001) 163; Tacoma (2006) 42-43.

⁹⁹ As noted by Bagnall (1993, 52-53), trash dumps of different periods were sprinkled over the sites of Oxyrhynchus and other Egyptian cities. It is difficult to avoid the impression

with the estimated total number of hectares occupied by all of the 'official' cities of early-third century Egypt without Alexandria (3,642.6 ha),¹⁰⁰ we obtain an estimate of 728,520-910,650 urban residents. Positing a higher population density of 300-400 inhabitants per hectare of urban space for Alexandria would imply a population of 288,900-385,200 for that city,¹⁰¹ resulting in an estimate of 1,017,420-1,295,850 for the urban population of Egypt as a whole. Population estimates for Roman Egypt during the mid-second century AD vary from 5-6 million (low count) to 8 million (high count).¹⁰² Starting from the low count figures, we obtain an urbanisation rate of between 17% and 25.9%.¹⁰³ In the high count scenario, we end up with a range of 12.7% to 16.2%.

In view of the high levels of soil productivity which are known to have existed in Graeco-Roman Egypt, an urbanisation rate of between 20% and 25% could be accounted for without any difficulty. The rates implied by the high count look on the low side. This defect could be remedied by assigning mid-second and early-third-century AD Alexandria a population

that the presence of urban garbage heaps and the large size of the temple precincts of the pharaonic and Graeco-Roman periods prevented urban population densities in Roman Egypt from reaching the considerably higher levels which have been observed in various later Near Eastern cities, such as eighteenth-century Aleppo, which has been credited with 300 inhabitants per hectare (Bagnall and Frier 1994, 55) or early nineteenth-century Cairo, which had approximately 210,960 inhabitants (McCarthy 1976, 1-3) on 660 ha (Raymond 1980, 92), implying a density of 320 inhabitants per hectare.

¹⁰⁰ 1,729 ha for the cities of the Nile Valley and the Fayum, 915 ha for those of the eastern Delta, and 998.6 ha for those of the western Delta.

¹⁰¹ Since Diodorus' claim (17.52.6) that Alexandria had more than 300,000 free inhabitants in the first century BC must be understood as symbolic (Scheidel 2004, 27-28), multiplying the size of the built-up area by hypothetical population densities is the only way to estimate the size of the Alexandrian population. Delia (1988, 290) credits Roman Alexandria with a population of 500,000-600,000, without explaining why she thinks ancient Alexandria was more densely populated than Cairo at the start of the nineteenth century. Based on a comparison with early nineteenth-century Cairo Scheidel (2004, 29) argues that the population of ancient Alexandria is unlikely to have been significantly larger than 320,000.

¹⁰² 5-6 million: Scheidel (2007) 48; 8 million: Lo Cascio (1999). Population estimates for Ptolemaic Egypt, which is generally held to have had a smaller population than mid-second or mid-third-century AD Egypt, range from an impossibly low 1.5 million (rejected by Bowman 2011, 325) to a much more plausible range of 3.5-4.5 million (Manning 2003, 47). If the population grew from 4 million in 150 BC to 6 million in AD 150, the annual growth rate would have been approximately 0.15%.

¹⁰³ Müller (2011) 143 argues that urbanisation rates in the Roman Fayum never exceeded 8.82%, but she operates with very low estimates for the population of the nome capital of Arsinoe. Accepting her population estimate of 159,600 for the Fayum in AD 200 (which lacks a clear basis) and combining this with an estimate of 46,000 for the population of the *metropolis* would result in an urbanisation rate of 28.8%.

of 500,000 instead of c. 385,000, but even this increase would push up the urbanisation rate only by a meagre 1.44%. Viewed in this light, the findings of this study provide a certain measure of support for the low count estimates for Roman Egypt, though an estimate of the order of 8 million cannot be ruled out altogether.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the conclusions which has emerged from this study is that Alexandria occupied an area which was more than three-and-a-half times larger than that occupied by Arsinoe, which appears to have been the second-largest city of Roman Egypt. If Alexandria also had more inhabitants per hectare of urban space than any other Egyptian city, as may well have been the case, its population might easily have been six or seven times larger than that of the next-largest Egyptian city. Of the remaining 51 'official' cities of Roman Egypt about one third (16 cities) appear to have occupied areas of 80+ hectares, and a further 34 cities can be assigned to the 20-80 ha range. Among the metropolitan cities only Ombi seems to have occupied an area smaller than 20 ha. On this basis the urban system of Egypt as a whole can confidently be described as a 'primo-concave system' dominated by one unusually large city.

Unfortunately, we are ill informed about the economic mechanisms which helped to sustain the population of the provincial capital. It remains unclear, for instance, how many Alexandrians earned their livelihoods through manufacturing or commerce. What we do know is that Alexandrian landowners owned or leased large amounts of land in other parts of Egypt, not only in the Delta but also in the Fayum and in the Nile Valley. The origins of this pattern of landownership lay in the early-Ptolemaic period, but the papyrological evidence suggests that it was maintained and indeed reinforced in the Roman period.¹⁰⁴ There can be little doubt that income from such holdings played a very important part in perpetuating Alexandria's pre-eminent position after it had ceased to be the capital of an independent Hellenistic kingdom.

¹⁰⁴ After AD 200 the councillorship of one of the *metropoleis* could be combined with membership of the council of Alexandria, giving the bouletic class of Alexandria the appearance of a provincial elite (e.g. Tacoma 2006, 126 and 140-141).

In addition to the provincial capital Egypt contained eleven or twelve other cities which occupied areas of over 100 hectares.¹⁰⁵ In most other provinces of the Roman empire, and even in Italy, few cities belonged to this size category.¹⁰⁶ The obvious explanation is that levels of soil productivity were much higher in Egypt than in almost any other part of the empire, with seed/yield ratios for wheat ranging between 1:10 and 1:12 in many parts of the province. Even if generous allowance is made for exports from Egypt, such a high level of soil productivity meant that there was room for a large aggregate urban population.¹⁰⁷ Under these circumstances there is nothing to contradict the view that the joint populations of the 'official' cities of the Nile Valley, the Fayum and the Delta might have accounted for between 20% and 25% of the total Egyptian population.

While this study confirms the prevailing view that the Nile Valley, the Fayum and the Delta were thoroughly urbanised in Roman times, it adds precision by showing that city sizes depended not only on the sizes of administrative territories and on region-specific levels of soil productivity, but also on regional patterns of landownership and on the moment when particular settlements were raised to metropolitan status. In the case of the western Delta proximity to Alexandria has been identified as another factor which might have determined possibilities for urban growth, but lack of sufficient data makes it difficult to substantiate the existence of this causal connection.

We must also allow for the existence of a small number of cities outside the provincial capital which were not fully sustained by their territories. Based on the inquiries undertaken in this contribution Pelusium and perhaps Schedia can be assigned to this category. In addition to this, the fact that various sources identify Memphis (which had a small territory) as one of the largest cities of Roman Egypt suggests that this city continued to be sustained either by state subsidies or by other types of revenue originating from other parts of Egypt.

In the final analysis we seem to be dealing with an urban system whose contours were shaped primarily by administrative decisions and by regional

¹⁰⁵ Cities with built-up areas larger than 100 ha include Antinoopolis, Arsinoe, Athribis, Herakleopolis, Hermopolis Magna, Leontopolis, Memphis, Oxyrhynchus, Pelusium, Ptolemais, Thmuis/Mendes and perhaps Schedia/Menelaus.

¹⁰⁶ For Italy see de Ligt (2016).

¹⁰⁷ Rathbone (1990) 108 estimates that at least 15 million *artabas* of wheat, representing 18.5% of the harvest, were exported from Egypt. Cf. Sharp (1998) who opts for a lower estimate of 9 million *artabas*.

and provincial patterns of landownership. The broad correlation between nome size and city size which can be observed in Roman Egypt strongly suggests that various forms of economic interaction between cities and their administrative territories accounted for a very large proportion of those economic activities by which the populations of these cities were sustained. At the same time Roman Egypt appears to have inherited a Ptolemaic pattern of landownership which made it possible for Alexandria to become, and to remain, the largest city of Egypt and the second-largest city of the Roman empire.

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APPENDIX 1A. CITY SIZES IN UPPER EGYPT (NILE VALLEY)

1. Antaiopolis (Qaw el-Kebir): as noted in *DE, Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. II, Ch. XII, p. 5-6, Graeco-Roman Antaiopolis must have been much larger than the 5 ha (425×115 m.) occupied by the enclosure of the temple of Anty/Antaios, but apart from the temple enclosure no other ruins were visible at the start of the nineteenth century. Cf. Wilkinson (1843b) 92-95.
2. Aphroditopolis (Atfih): 150 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 100 ha or 150 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342; somewhat smaller than 100 ha according to Bagnall (1993) 52. All of these estimates are based on Johnson (1911) 6. The latter refers to “the site” of Atfih occupying an area of roughly 3000×500 m., but a careful reading of his account reveals that he is talking about the area occupied by the city and its cemeteries.
3. Apollonopolis Heptakomias (Kom Isfaht): based on *P. Brem.* 23 (AD 116), the total number of houses in this city can be estimated as *c.* 1,275 (cf. Tacoma 2006, 46 n. 36). With 1.4 households per house (Alston 2002, 70) and 5.5 people per household (*ibid.*), the total number of city-dwellers can be estimated as *c.* 9,820. Assuming an urban population density of 225 people per hectare, this would imply an area estimate of *c.* 45 ha. Based on the fact that Ptolemy mentions Aphroditopolis as the nome capital, Abdel Ghani (2003) 77, claims that this city had reasserted itself, but Ptolemy might have been relying on non-contemporary information here. Cf. *P. Oxy.* XLVII, 3362 (*c.* AD 140-150) and the Antonine Itinerary (*It. Ant.* 158.1), both of which mention Apollonopolis but not Aphroditopolis.
4. Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu): original extent *c.* 30 ha to judge by Figure 4 in Moeller (2013). As noted by Bagnall (1993) 52, the entire residential quarter excavated at Edfu by the Franco-Polish expedition in the 1930s was unoccupied from the late second to the late sixth century.

5. Arsinoe (Medinet el-Fayum): 236 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 288 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342, and Reiter (2012), both following Davoli (1988) 150. The latter derived this estimate from the map accompanying Schweinfurth (1887), but this publication actually offers an estimate of 225 ha for the area covered by visible ruins (Schweinfurth 1887, 56). Since the area surrounding the present-day village of Minshat Abdallah also appears to have been part of the urban area (Schweinfurth 1887, 56 and 78), this basic figure may be increased to *c.* 260 ha.
6. Diospolis Magna (Thebes): Thebes was heavily punished after the suppression of the revolts of 88 BC and 29 BC (Vandorpe 1995, 234-236), and Strabo (17.1.46) reports that the area of the city was occupied by villages.
7. Diospolis Parva (Hiw): according to *DE, Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. II, Ch. XI, p. 7, only a few isolated fragments were visible at Hoû at the start of the nineteenth century.
8. Herakleopolis (Ihnasya el-Medina): 360 acres (144 ha) according to Naville (1894) 1; 144 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 150 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342. But note Petrie's warning (Petrie 1905, 26) that the residential area of the second to fourth centuries AD appears to have been confined to the western part of the city, with the city as whole showing signs of having drifted eastward between Late Antiquity and the early twentieth century.
9. Hermonthis (Armant): approximately 30 ha to judge by *DE*, plate volumes, *Antiquités*, vol. I, planche 97.
10. Hermopolis: 120 or 160 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 160 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342. To judge by *DE*, plate volumes, *Antiquités*, vol. IV, planche 50, the *tell* to the north of the village of Ashmunein had a length of *c.* 1,750 m., a maximum width of *c.* 1,275 m. and a surface area of *c.* 210 ha (cf. *DE, Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. II, Ch. XIV, 5, where the length of the perimeter is given as 6,300 m.), but by the early 1980s the dimensions of the mound including the areas covered by modern buildings had been reduced to *c.* 1,500 × 1,000 m. (Spencer 1983, 3). Roeder (1959) 106, gives the size of the area occupied by visible ruins as 1.6 km × 1.2 km (= 196 ha), but since the area to the north of the temple enclosure tapers on the north, 160 ha is a more realistic estimate for the area occupied by the ruins. The other side of the coin is that Roeder's estimate excludes the village of Ashmunein (*c.* 15 ha) which seems to stand on top of the southernmost part of the Graeco-Roman city (Spencer 1983, 6; cf. Roeder 1959, 27). On this basis the size of the ancient city may be estimated as 160 ha if the area occupied by the village is excluded and as 175 ha if it is included.
- 10a. Antinoopolis (Sheikh Ibada): autonomous city within Hermopolite nome. Area enclosed by city wall 200 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; and id. (2011) 342, but only 115 ha according to Romagnoli (2014) 85. Cf. Spanu (2013) 9: 120 ha plus a small area (*c.* 5 ha?) covered by the village of Sheikh Ibada.
11. Hypsele/Hypselis (el Shutb): elevated to metropolitan status in the second century AD (Eller 2015). To judge by the city plan of present-day Shutb,

the most elevated part of the town, enclosed by the ring-road and the canal, occupied an area of *c.* 30 ha (after elimination of the triangular quarter in the eastern part of the city). Cf. <http://www.floodmap.net/Elevation/ElevationMap/>, Egypt, Asyut province, Shutb.

12. Koptos: to judge by the map in Weill (1910), 106 (with detailed discussion of boundaries on p. 111-113), the area occupied by the Graeco-Roman city was bounded by the Shanshur canal and by the hamlets of Oueidat and Dafadef, and extended north-east-ward as far as El Kala and Kom Hadil. On this basis an estimate of *c.* 85 ha seems reasonable. Cf. *DE*, text volumes, *Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. II, Ch. X, p. 64, where the ruins are said to occupy an irregularly shaped area with a perimeter of 4,000 or 4,500 metres.
13. Kynopolis (at or near el Qeis): good discussions of the probable whereabouts of Kynopolis include Amélineau (1893) 396; Litinas (1994) 150-153, Falivene (1998) 115-115, and Bagnall & Rathbone (2004) 158.
14. Latopolis (Esna): to judge by *DE, État moderne*, plate volumes, vol. I, planche 1, Fig. 3, early nineteenth-century Esna, which stood on top of the mounds marking the site of its Graeco-Roman predecessor, occupied an area of approximately 22 ha. Cf. *DE*, text volumes, *Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. I (Paris 1809) Ch. VII, p. 3, where Esna is described as an oval-shaped town with a maximum length of 900 m. and a maximum width of 400 m, implying a surface area of *c.* 28 ha.
15. Lykopolis (Asyut): because the area occupied by early-nineteenth Asyut more or less coincided with that occupied by its ancient predecessor, the mound could not be dug out for *sebakh*. This explains why the contours of the ancient city show up beautifully on modern elevation maps. See www.floodmap.net/Elevation/ElevationMap/, Egypt, Asyut province, Asyut, showing an area of *c.* 75 ha where average building heights exceed 80 m. above sea level.
16. Nilopolis (Dalas): for the whereabouts of Graeco-Roman Nilopolis see Amélineau (1893) 136-137.
17. Omboi (Kom Ombo): *c.* 10 ha according to Holzhausen (1895) 2.
18. Oxyrhynchus: 100+ ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 160 ha or 180 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342. Subías (2008) 13, and ead. (2011) 101, offers an estimate of between 200 ha and 300 ha for Byzantine Oxyrhynchus, but these figures are based on an incorrect interpretation of the scale bar which appears on her maps (Subías 2011, Figs 4 and 5). If we correct for this error, we obtain estimates of 125 ha and 200 ha for the Roman city and for its early-Byzantine successor respectively. One of the largest city of fourth-century Egypt according to Ammian 22.16.6.
19. Panopolis (Akhmim): a comparison between the plan of the modern city and the elevation map of Akhmim (www.floodmap.net/Elevation/CountryElevationMap/, Egypt, Suhaj province, Akhmim) shows that the old city centre, where average building heights exceed 72 metres above sea level, occupies an area of *c.* 50 ha. *DE*, text volumes, *Antiquités, Descriptions*, vol. II, Ch. XI, p. 22, reports ruins surrounding the early-nineteenth century town in an arch running from north-east to north-west. Few traces of these ruins

survive, but in 1981 parts of a Graeco-Roman temple dedicated to Min and Triphis were discovered in an area immediately to the north-east of the old city centre, and in 1991 remains belonging to a temple of Rameses II were discovered at the site of an old cemetery bordering the south-western part of the old city. In the second half of the nineteenth century the river Nile reached the site of the latter temple at the time of the annual inundation (Baedeker 1902, 216). From *DE* and from various later travel accounts (e.g. Lane 2000, 272) it also appears that in the first half of the nineteenth century the eastern edge of the mound was bordered by a small plain which was traversed by a canal running from the landing-place in the direction of the city. To judge by these clues, the size of the area occupied by the central area and the ruins surrounding it cannot have exceeded 75 ha.

20. Ptolemais (Al-Manshah/El-Menshiyeh): area occupied by Graeco-Roman city 120+ ha according to Bowman (2000) 178, but the only basis for this estimate is Strabo's assertion that Ptolemais was the most populous city of the Thebaid and not inferior to Memphis. Note Wilkinson's view that the original extent of Ptolemais as revealed by the mounds did not justify Strabo's claim (Wilkinson 1843b, 108). Bagnall and Rathbone (2004) 173, suggest that the city's importance declined during the Empire.
21. Tentyra (Dendara): c. 60 ha to judge by planche 2 in *DE*, plate volumes, *Antiquités*, vol. IV. Cf. Marouard (2016) 9, Fig. 3 (a new map prepared by Pierre Laisney and Damien Zignani).

APPENDIX 1B. OASIS CITIES OF UPPER EGYPT

1. Hibis (Kharga Oasis): c. 100 ha according to Bagnall (1993) 52; 120 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342, based on Wagner (1987) 157 n. 3. Wagner's figures are based on Winlock (1941) 2, but the latter's plan of Graeco-Roman Hibis (Plate XXIX) shows that the ancient city occupied an area of only 60 ha.
2. Psobthis (Bahariya Oasis): size unknown, but clearly substantial according to Colin (2013) 174-176. The appearance of the Small Oasis in a nome list of the mid-second century AD (*P. Oxy.* XLVII 3362) indicates that it was regarded as a separate nome.
3. Trimithis (Dakhla Oasis): raised to *polis* status around AD 300; settlement area at least 45 ha according to Davoli (2015) 67, but only c. 40 ha to judge by the very detailed maps on the website of the Amheida project of New York University (www.amheida.org).

APPENDIX 2A. CITY SIZES IN LOWER EGYPT (DELTA)

1. Alexandria: settlement area 749.4 ha according to Mumford (2010) 331; c. 930 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178; 972 ha according to id. (2011) 343; 825 ha according to Delia (1988) 279, excluding the extra-mural *proast-eia*; walled area 1,000 ha according to Haas (1997) 46 (based on Strabo 17.1).

2. Andropolis: Strabo (17.22) refers to Gynaikopolis as a nome capital, whereas Ptolemy only refers to Andropolis, suggesting that the latter city had become the new *metropolis*. After more than a century of research and speculation (summarised by Spencer 2008, 8), the most plausible candidate for Gynaikopolis remains Kom el Hisn, which occupied an area of *c.* 60 ha at the start of the twentieth century (Daressy 1903, 281; Kirby e.a. 1998, 23), although some researchers place this city at Kom Firin (Lanna 2011, 184). The most likely candidate for Andropolis/Andron is Kharibta (Amélineau 1893, 281; Gascoigne 2002, vol. I, 75-86). Figure IV.1 in the second volume of Gascoigne (2002) shows that the village of Kharibta, which stands on top of part of the Graeco-Roman city, and the area of Tell al-Krum, which was also occupied in the Graeco-Roman period, occupied an area of *c.* 35 ha in the early 1940s.
3. Athribis (Tell Atrib near Benha): 190 ha according to Bowman (2000) 178, and id. (2011) 342; 120-140 ha according to Leclère (2008) 586; 140 ha according to Wilson (2012f) 145. Since the site includes an area in which the surviving remains are mostly Ptolemaic (Alston 2002, 236), it seems wise to use the lower end of Leclère's range (120 ha) as an estimate for the city of the early third century AD. One of the largest cities of fourth-century Egypt according to Ammian 22.16.6.
4. Bubastis (Tell Basta): reduced to 84 ha by 1949 according to Van Siclen (1999) 778; 100 ha in the 1920s but originally considerably larger according to Leclère (2008) 586; at present 75 ha, but originally much larger according to Wilson (2012b). Original extent at least 140 ha according to Tietze & Abd el-Maksoud (2004) 11; originally 140 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342. On Wilkinson's plan, which was drawn up in the 1820s (Selim & Tietze 1997, Fig. 5; Leclère 2008, pl. 8.1 and 8.3), the ruins occupy an area of 1,700 × 900 m. (153 ha). Eliminating those areas occupied by the ruined Bastet temple, the necropoleis, the *Ka* chapels and the Middle Kingdom palace, we are left with an area of at most 95 ha (1,050 × 900 m. = 94.5 ha). To judge from Wilkinson's description (Wilkinson 1843a, 430), the south-eastern part (*c.* 35 ha) of this area was a flat and open space, suggesting that the built-up area of the Roman city was no larger than *c.* 60 ha. Adding the space delimited by the outer temple enclosure (*c.* 10 ha), on the assumption that this area continued to be used for at least some religious or secular activities (Roeder 1959, 2; Tietze & Grönwald 1998; Vaelke 2009; Rose-now & Rehren 2014, 172), would raise this estimate to *c.* 70 ha. According to Habachi (1957) 3, Bubastis was reduced to a small village during the Roman empire, but this inference is based on a passage in the martyrdom of Apa Shnoubé which might refer to the Arsinoitic village of Bubastis (Vaelke 2009, 490 n. 10).
5. Busiris (Abusir Bana): according to *DE, État moderne*, vol. II, p. 103, early-nineteenth century Bousyr/Abousyr was surrounded by ruins, and remains of an extra-urban mound with remains of a small square-shaped temple are said to have been situated at a distance of *c.* 300 m. from these ruins. Similarly, Wilkinson (1843a) 432, refers to the mounds of the Graeco-Roman city extending beyond the village to the west. The small extra-urban mound

- referred to by *DE* might well correspond to a small cluster of houses near the south-western edge of the present-day city. On this basis the area occupied by the Graeco-Roman city might be estimated as *c.* 50 ha.
6. Buto (Tell el Fara'in): geophysical research has revealed the settlement site of Tell el Fara'in to be a natural sand dune rather than a man-made hill (Hartung e.a. 2009, 173), making it hazardous to equate the size of the tell with that of the city. Area occupied by tell 84 ha in around 1930 according to Daressy (1931) 625; 65-75 ha according to Leclère (2008) 581; 65 ha according to Wilson (2012f) 146. If the Roman city was co-extensive with its Saite predecessor (Hartung e.a. 2009, Abb. 34-35), it would have occupied an area of *c.* 40 ha, but surface finds suggest that originally the built-up area might have been somewhat larger than this (ibid. 187). Parts of Kom A were occupied by a late-Ptolemaic cemetery and by suburban potters' kilns of the first and second centuries AD (Wilson 2008, 146-147; Hartung e.a. 2009, 142-148, 158-169 and 187). On this basis 45-50 ha may be offered as a reasonable estimate for the built-up area of the Graeco-Roman city Cf. Petrie (1904), Pl. XLIV, where the Roman town looks much smaller than on Hartung's map.
 7. Diospolis Inferior (Tell el-Balamun): 130 acres (52 ha) without the area of the *temenos* when visited by Howard Carter in 1913 (Reeves 1993, 107); 60-70 ha according to Leclère (2008) 581; 80 ha according to Wilson (2012d) if the flat area where the temple precinct once stood (*c.* 15 ha) is included. However, since the western mound, occupying *c.* 15 ha (Spencer 1996, 14) is Roman, whereas the eastern one, occupying *c.* 10 ha (Spencer 1996, 19) is mainly dynastic, 30 ha (15 ha for the city plus 15 ha for the temple precinct, on the assumption that this area continued to be used for religious and secular purposes), seems a generous estimate for the Roman city.
 8. Heliopolis (Matariya): deserted according to Strabo 17.1.27.
 9. Hermopolis Parva (Damanhur): a comparison between the representation of Damanhour on planche 36 of Jacotin's *Atlas géographique* and the modern city plan shows that the mound of the ancient city occupied a roughly circular area in the southern part of the old city centre, between the Abd el-Salam Aref Road and the Al Mdafen-Al Hasafi Road. On this basis the area occupied by the Graeco-Roman city can be estimated as *c.* 30 ha.
 10. Kabasa (Shabas el-Shuhada): the cemetery on the western edge of the town is situated on a mound which occupies *c.* 5 ha, but the ancient city must have been much larger than this. The old town centre to the east of the cemetery (which occupies *c.* 15 ha) does not seem to be standing on high ground but must have been above the water table during the annual inundations of the Nile before the building of the Aswan dam.
 11. Leontopolis (Tell el-Moqdam): "several hundred acres" according to Naville (1894) 27; "plusieurs centaines d'acres" according to Daressy (1931) 627 (summarising Naville); approximately 150 feddans (63 ha) at the start of the twentieth century according to Daressy (1908) 205; dimensions 1000 × 750 m. according to the website of the Delta Survey Project (<http://deltasurvey.ees.ac.uk/>, s.v. Moqdam, T), to be interpreted as maximum length and maximum width of the surviving parts of the tell. All these estimates are for the built-up

area plus cemeteries. According to the DSP website, the site appears to have moved from north to south during its long existence, probably in response to shifting water courses, and in some parts of the mound habitation seems to have ended after the fourth century BC (Redmount & Friedman 1997).

12. Letopolis (Ausim): unclear.
13. Marea: referred to a village by Athen., *Deipn.* 1.33d. Area occupied by Byzantine city 15-20 ha to judge by Pichot (2012) 9, Fig. 18, if Marea is to be identified with the complex of sites near Huwwariya, c. 45 km west of Alexandria; 19.7 ha according to Babraj & Szymańska (2010) 77. As is generally known, the identification of Huwwariya as the site of Marea is highly controversial, with Philoxenite being an alternative possibility, and Haggag (2010) 54, arguing that Ptolemaic and early-Roman Marea was situated c. 2.5 km to the west of the Byzantine city. Alternative candidates for Marea include Kom el-Idris near modern Mirgheb and Ammareya/El-Amrieh. See Wipszycka (2012) for a good discussion of this conundrum.
14. Memphis: area occupied by ruins 600 ha according to Jeffreys (1999) 487; perhaps c. 450 ha used for habitation according to Müller (2006) 93, and Thompson (2012) 29; area occupied by irregularly shaped tell 240 ha and size of potential inhabited area only 180 ha according to McEvedy (2011) 206. While most recent population estimates for the Ptolemaic and early-Roman city tend to converge on 50,000-60,000 (e.g. Manning 2010, 139; Kehoe 2010, 312; Thompson 2012, x, but see Renberg & Bubelis 2011, 183 n. 20), McEvedy estimates the population of Roman Memphis as only 10,000. For the third and fourth centuries the best clue might be Ammian's claim (22.16.6) that Memphis belonged to the same class as Athribis, Thmuis and Oxyrhynchus.
15. Menelaus/Schedia (Kom el-Giza): at the beginning of the twentieth century Schedia still was a prominent hill with a length of about 2.5 km and a width of 1.5 km (Bergmann & Heinzelmänn 2005, 2). Size of settlement area c. 120 ha (excluding the inner harbour) to judge by Bergmann & Heinzelmänn (2007) 67, Abb. 3. However, as pointed out by Bergmann e.a. (2010) 110, the built-up area does not seem to have reached a significant depth. If the Roman city occupied the northern and southern banks over a distance of 2.5 km and if the settlement areas on either side of the river had an average width of 150 m., the size of the settlement area would have been c. 75 ha. Lanna (2011) 160, provides an estimate of only 30 ha, but Bergmann and Heinzelmänn's maps shows a much larger settlement zone.
16. Metelis: location unknown, but probably not far from the modern city of Fuwa (Amélineau 1893, 245). At present the most serious contenders are Kom al-Ahmer (Kenawi 2014, 112) and Kom al-Ghoraf (Sist 2011 and 2013; Lanna 2011, 182-183). Of these sites Kom al-Ahmer occupies an area of approximately 22 ha. Finds include statue heads, a considerable number of coins belonging to the Ptolemaic, early-Roman, late Roman and early-Byzantine periods, a Ptolemaic and Roman bath complex, large amounts of imported pottery and remains of Hellenistic tower houses (Marchiori 2014). Sist's main argument for identifying Kom al-Ghoraf as the site of ancient Metelis is that the settlement's destruction in around AD 640 proves that we are dealing with

a major administrative centre. At present Kom al-Ghoraf occupies c. 32 ha (Sist 2011, 140; Wilson 2012a, 105), but its original size has been estimated as “oltre 55 ettari” (Sist 2011, 140; Lanna 2011, 181). During the Roman period only the central part of this large area seems to have been used for habitation (Sist 2011, 141). Wilson (2012a) 106, lists Fuwa, Tell Mutubis and Tell al-Ghoraf as possible locations for Metelis. It seems wise to await further discoveries before committing oneself to one particular identification.

17. Naukratis (Kom Gaief): technically an autonomous city in the Saite nome. Originally more than 32 ha according to Bagnall (1993) 52, but more than 60 ha according to Thomas (2014) 195. Alston (2001) 172 notes that during the surveys which were carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s only small amounts of Roman ceramics were discovered in the northern quarters of the site, and Thomas (2014) 212, Fig. 5, shows that sherds of vessels and lamps declined by c. 40% between the early imperial period and AD 200. Based on these indications, 40 ha seems a generous estimate for Naukratis in the early third century AD.
18. Nikiou (Kom Zawijet Razin near Manuf): since Coptic and Arabic sources equate Nikiou with a place called Pshati/Abshadi, identification with the site of present-day Ibshadi (c. 20 km northwest of Manuf) is extremely attractive from a textual point of view (e.g. Amélineau 1893, 283), but the fact that no ruins have been detected at this site (Butcher 1897, 390 n. 1) has persuaded many scholars to posit a second locality called Ibshadi at or near Kom Zawijet Razin.¹⁰⁸ See the excellent discussion by Timm (1985) 1137-1138 and footnote 26. The mounds of Kom Zawijet Razin occupied an area of c. 54 ha (900 × 600 m) when visited by Daressy in 1912, but their original length might have been up to 1,100 m. rather than 600 m. (Daressy 1912, 192). The other side of the coin is that Daressy's estimate of 900 m. for the north-south diameter refers to maximum width rather than to average width. On this basis c. 100 ha might be offered as a reasonable estimate.
19. Onuphis (Mahallat Minuf): the exact whereabouts of the Onuphite nome and its capital have been debated for many decades, but based on the excellent discussion of Dhennin (2016) 59-60, the modern town of Mahallat Minuf (= Minuf as-Sufli = *Onuphis katō*) is by far the best candidate. Other proponents of this view include Daressy (1922) 187 and Gauthier (1935) 22-23. As pointed out by Dhennin, both *P. Ryl.* IV 616 (fourth century AD) and the medieval *scalae* (Daressy 1922, 187-188) place the Onuphite nome between the Phthemphuthi nome and the Xoites. As noted by Toussoun and Timm, it is a difficulty for this view that in the second half of the eleventh century AD the province of *el-Menufiyatain/al-Manufiyaten* (“the two Minufiyas”) was situated to the south of the province of Tonditawiya/Tanta (Toussoun 1926-1928, 28; Timm 1988, 1574), but the former province might

¹⁰⁸ Toussoun (1926-1928) 309, reports yet another Ibshadi further north, in the territory of the present-day village of Minyat Ibiar. Of course the bishop of Nikiou might have moved to Abshadi/Ibshadi after the Christian population of the former city had been slaughtered by the Muslim troops of Amr ibn al-A'as in AD 640, but there is no concrete evidence to support this scenario.

- have kept its name after losing some of its territory to the newly established province of Tandtawia/Tanta (Toussoun 1926-1928, 42-43 and 222).
20. Pachnamunis (Kom el-Khanziri): 500 × 500 m (25 ha) according to Rowland & Wilson (2006) 6, but 750 × 400 m (30 ha) when visited in 2005 according to website of Delta Survey Project (<http://deltasurvey.ees.ac.uk/>, s.v. Khanziri, K el-). Because this website gives maximum length and maximum width, 25 ha might be a realistic estimate for the built-up area.
 21. Panephyssis: destroyed by tsunami of AD 365 (Cassian, *Coll.* 7.26 and 11.3); unlocated but probably at or near present-day Al-Manzala (Foucart 1891, 65-66; Daressy 1894, 204 and 206; Geissen & Weber 2007, 276; <http://deltasurvey.ees.ac.uk/>, s.v. Menzala).
 22. Pelusium: c. 70 ha (1,500 m × 450 m) for Tell Farama to judge from Jakubiak (2009) Fig. 31. This estimate has to be increased to c. 130 ha to take account of the eastern suburbs which have been detected on Tell el-Mahzan en Tell el Kana'is. See the maps in Jaritz & Carrez-Maratray (1996).
 23. Phakusa (Faqus): nome capital of the enlarged Arabian nome consisting of the old Arabian nome and the territory of the old Heroopolite nome (Geissen & Weber 2008, 278-279). Referred to as a village by Strabo 17.26. The best discussion is that of Foucart (1901), but his account shows that most of the remains of the Graeco-Roman city had disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century.
 24. Pharbaitos (Horbeit): at least 40 ha (800 × 500 m.) to judge by Snape (1986) 5-6, Figs. 2 and 3.
 25. Sais (Sa el-Hagar): according to Wilson (2012c) Sais occupied an area of up to 300 ha during the 26th Dynasty, but after the Persian conquest the Saite palatial complex inside the North Enclosure was abandoned, and the town contracted back to the original site near the modern village of Sa el-Hagar (Wilson 2006, 147 and 269; Leclère 2008, 184 and 586). To judge from Wilson (2006) 262. Figure 87, the southern enclosure which was situated in the area of the 'Great Pit', occupied an area of c. 25 ha. The town immediately to the south might have occupied another 25 hectares (cf. Wilson 2006, 182, Figure 64), although the southern limit of the settlement has not yet been established with absolute certainty (ibid. 197-199 and 204).
 26. Sebennytus (Sammanud). As noted in *DE*, text volumes, *État moderne*, vol. II, 105-106, early-nineteenth century Sammanud was much smaller than ancient Sebennytus. Cf. Wilkinson (1843a) 433: extensive mounds but no ruins. For the approximate size of the ancient city, see the maps in Spencer (2001): c. 25 ha for the northern part the city plus c. 25 ha for the southern tell, on the assumption that the southern part of the old city centre (c. 12 ha) was also inhabited.
 27. Sethroe/Herakleopolis Parva (Tell Belim): at present 1000 × 569 m. but originally larger according to Spencer (2002) 39. It should, however, be noted that these dimensions refer to length and maximum width, the area occupied by the Tell actually being c. 45 ha. As pointed out by Spencer (2001) 11 and id. (2002) 39, only the eastern part of this area appears to have been occupied in the Roman period. For all these reasons 30 ha seems a realistic estimate for the first half of the third century AD.

29. Tanis: size of area occupied by tell a bit less than 180 ha according to Brissaud (2003) 142. Cf. Leclère (2008) 586: at most 170-180 ha, and Bard (2007) 271: 177 ha. Built-up area c. 105 ha (1,350 × 800 m) if the Roman city covered the same area as the city of the 21st and 22nd dynasties to judge by Brissaud (2010) 612, Fig. 5; cf. Mumford (2010) 331, Khorram e.a. (2012) 76, Fig. 4.11, and Parcak & Mumford (forthcoming). This estimate assumes that the entire area to the north of the 'popular necropolis', where many inhumations of the early-imperial period have been detected (Petrie 1885, 37; Harlaut 2000), was used for habitation. However, since a handful of Roman graves, probably of the second and third centuries AD, were also found in the flat area immediately to the south of the high mounds surrounding the temple of Amun (Petrie 1885, 36), 90 ha might be a more realistic estimate for the Roman city. Referred to as a 'large city' by Strabo 17.1.20, but as a 'small city' (*polichnē*) by Flavius Josephus (*BJ* 4.11.26.5) betraying the latter's ignorance of Roman Egypt.
30. Taa: perhaps to be identified with the locality of Hōd Tuwwa, c. 5 km west of Tanta (Daressy 1922, 189; Timm 1992, 2896), where Daressy reported a small *kom* occupying c. 25 ha which had already been largely levelled in the early 1920s. By the mid-1930s its size had been reduced to 16 ha, and by the early 1940s it had disappeared altogether (Ball 1942, 109). The settlement at Hōd Tuwwa was situated to the west of the Thermuthiac branch, just like the *kura* of Tuwa during the ninth and tenth centuries AD (Toussoun 1926-1928, 34-35). Ptolemy claims that Taa was situated to the east of the Thermuthiac branch, but since he places Nikiou too far to the north-west, he may have ended up with a distorted view of the upper course of this branch. Daressy identified Taa with present-day Tanta, but since Taa and Tanta-thoites were separate cities as early as the third century BC (*P. Tebt.* III 845), this theory cannot be maintained. It remains possible that Tantatho/Tanta, which clearly was an important city in the pharaonic and Graeco-Roman periods (cf. *DE, État moderne*, II, 114), was the original nome capital, the move to Taa representing a relatively recent response to the rise of the Thermuthiac river as a major water course.
31. Thmuis (Tell el-Timai): 80-90 ha according to Bowman (2011) 342. But see Leclère (2008): 80 ha for Thmuis, 95 ha for Mendes, plus an unknown part of the low-lying area connecting these two cities. During the early Empire Mendes was overshadowed by Thmuis (which became the nome capital), but parts of the former city continued to be inhabited (Leclère 2008, 341). If we assign early-imperial Thmuis 80 ha, Mendes 40 ha, and assume limited habitation in the marshy area connecting the two cities, we end up with a rough estimate of 120 ha. Cf. Blouin (2014) 125, for the view that during the second century AD Thmuis might have been twice as large as Mendes. One of the largest cities of Roman Egypt according to Ammian 22.16.6.
32. Xoïs (Sakha): approximately 80 feddans (33.6 ha) when visited by Howard Carter in 1912, after limited digging for *sebakh* (James 1992, 187). As noted by Chassinat (1922) 9, the mounds of Sakha were rapidly being levelled during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

APPENDIX 2B. CITIES SIZES IN LOWER EGYPT (OUTSIDE DELTA)

1. Ammon: village-like settlement according to Diod. 17.50-51. It is generally agreed that the 'village' referred by Diodorus was situated on the hill of the present-day village of Aghurmi (Kuhlmann 1999, 739). Since Diodorus places the temple of Amun within the second wall circuit, while "the other temple of Amun" (c. 400 metres south of Aghurmi) was situated outside the third wall circuit, the ancient settlement might have occupied an area of c. 25 ha (720 × 360 m.).
2. Paraetionium: the two most important cities of the Libyan nome were Apis (Zawiyet Umm el-Rakham) and Paraetionium (Marsa Matruh). It is unclear which of these cities was the nome capital, but Paraetionium is a strong candidate (Reynolds 2012). During the Roman period the main urban concentration at Marsa Matruh seems to have been split between the c. 4.5 km long southern shore of the West Lagoon and the top of the ridge that separates the lagoon from the sea (White 2003, 155). Cf. White (1999b) 473: 2 km of urban remains along the eastern and southern shores of the west lagoon. According to Strabo 17.14, the city and harbour of Paraetionium had a perimeter of 40 stadia (7,200 m.). Since the western lagoon is about 900 metres wide, this figure can be explained as referring to a city consisting of a narrow strip of buildings (with an average width of c. 150 m.) extending on either side of the western lagoon for approximately two kilometres. According to this interpretation, the city would have had a built-up area of c. 60 ha (4,000 × 150 m.). For the city of Apis, see White (1999a).

APPENDIX 3: THE SIX NILE BRANCHES REFERRED TO BY PTOLEMY

1. Agathodaimon: to be identified with the Canopic branch.
2. Taly: almost certainly to be identified with the Bolbitine branch of Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny. If the information provided by Ptolemy can be relied upon, this branch took leave from the Canopic branch near Hermopolis Parva/Damanhur (Cooper 2014, 34-36).
3. Thermuthiac branch: based on linear alluvial deposits lining the modern Batanuniya canal and the Kassed/Qasid canal, Toussoun (1922) 45-46 and planche XI, reconstructs the Thermuthiac river as running to the east of Zawiyet Razin/Nikiou, to the west of Tanta and Xoïs/Sakha and as bending to the north-east after intersecting with the Butic canal. The only downside of this reconstruction is that it places Pachnamunis to the west of the Thermuthiac branch, whereas Ptolemy (4.5.21) places it to the east. Therefore I have followed Ball (1942) 120, in assuming that this branch continued to flow in a northerly direction after passing Xoïs/Sakha and emptied directly into Lake Burullus rather than into the Sebennyitic branch. This reconstruction is supported by recent geomorphological research which has revealed traces of an old Nile branch approaching the site of Pachnemunis from the south and discharging into Lake Burullus to the west of this city (Ibrahim

2002, Fig. 4 on p. 10). A team of German archaeologists directed by Stephan Seidlmayer and Robert Schiestl claims to have detected the precise course of the Thermuthiac branch south-west of Sakha (www.en.ag.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/research/delta-project/index.html).

4. Athribitic branch: because Ptolemy (4.5.21) places the cities of Sebennytus and Busiris to the east of his Athribitic branch, various nineteenth-century and twentieth-century scholars have concluded that the Athribitic branch must have followed approximately the same course as the medieval and present-day Tanuha branch/Bahr Shibin (Toussoun 1922, 46-47; Cooper 2014, 89-91). Against this reconstruction, John Ball (Ball 1942, 120) argued that the upper course of the Athribitic river must have followed approximately the same course as the medieval Damietta branch. This alternative reconstruction sets some of the information provided by Ptolemy aside by putting the cities of Busiris and Sebennytus to the west of the Athribitic branch, but since Ptolemy's understanding of the geography of the central Delta was demonstrably inadequate (cf. below), this is not an unsurmountable obstacle. A team of Egyptian geologists (El Gamili & Ibrahim 2001) have identified multiple paleochannels to the west of present-day Samannud some of which appear to have connected the Damietta branch with the Bahr Shibin, and a river course or canal connecting these two branches is also visible on Pocock's and Robert de Vaugondy's maps of the Nile Delta (Cooper 2014, 288-289). Alternatively, the canal of Awish al-Hagar, which is visible on planche 35 of Jacotin's *Atlas géographique*, might have connected Ball's version of the Athribitic branch and the lower course of the Bahr Shibin. According to Ptolemy the Athribitic branch discharged into the Mediterranean through the (man-made) Pineptimi mouth. The exact whereabouts of this mouth remain disputed, but based on recent geological research (Stanley e.a. 1992, 42-43) the Bisindila/Basandila drain has been identified as the most plausible candidate. For the purposes of this article I have assumed that Nile branches corresponding roughly to the modern Bahr Shibin and to the upper and middle sections of the Damietta branch already existed in the second and early third centuries AD, without committing myself to any theory concerning the identification of either of these river courses with Ptolemy's Athribitic branch.
5. Busiritic branch: based on the coordinates given by Ptolemy, Toussoun (1922) 48, situates the point where the Busiritic river branched off from the Pelusiatic branch near the village of El-Naamna/An Naamna, south-west of Bubastis. According to his reconstruction, it joined the course of the present-day Bahr Mues, traditionally identified with the upper course of the old Tanitic branch, near El-Gedaida (Toussoun 1922, 19, 58 and planche XI) and reached the Phatnitic mouth after flowing through the Daqahliya depression. It is, however, difficult to see how any water course flowing through the low-lying parts of Daqahliya could have reached the Damietta branch, and the south-to-north trajectory posited by Toussoun sits uneasily with the fact that throughout the medieval and modern periods the Nile branches of the eastern Delta have tended to flow in a north-easterly direction towards Lake Manzala (cf. Cooper 2014, 87). In addition to this one would expect the Busiritic branch to have flown past the city of Busiris in the central Delta. For all these

reasons it is tempting to adopt Daressy's conclusion (Daressy 1894, 214, implicitly followed by Bagnall & Rathbone 2004, 79, Fig. 2.6.1.) that Ptolemy's assertions concerning the Busiritic branch were based on a map which erroneously placed the city of Busiris in the southern Delta.¹⁰⁹

6. Bubastic branch: to be identified with the Pelusiatic branch of Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny.

APPENDIX 4. HYPOTHETICAL NOME BOUNDARIES IN THE DELTA

1. *Alexandreōn chōrā*: between Agathodaimon and desert; northern boundary half-way between Hermopolis and Schedia; southern boundary half-way between Hermopolis and Gynaikopolis?
2. Andropolite nome: between Agathodaimon and desert. Northern boundary half-way between Gynaikopolis (Kom el-Hisn?) and Hermopolis Parva?
3. Arabian nome: between Pelusiatic branch and desert.
4. Athribite nome: mainly between Athribitic and Pelusiatic branches, but possibly with some additional territory near Quesna/Quwaysna on the left bank of the Athribitic branch (Rowland 2012). Bietak (1975) 176, Abb. 43, assumes that during the Roamn period the Athribite nome of the Ptolemaic period lost almost all of its territory to the Bubastite nome and that a new Athribite nome was created in the southern part of the Leontopolite nome, but this theory is not only inherently unlikely but also depends on the questionable assumption that during the second century AD the upper course of the Pelusiatic branch coincided with the upper course of the old Tanitic branch.
5. Bubastite nome: Ptolemy (4.5.24) places this nome to the east of the Pelusiatic branch (corresponding roughly to the Bahr Sharqawiya and the Bahr El-Khalili or Bahr El-Shibini), but while this is correct for most of its territory (Naville 1891, 44; cf. Toussoun 1922, planche IV), scholarly opinion remains divided over whether the city of Bubastis was situated immediately to the east of the Pelusiatic branch (Bietak 1975, 92 and 132; cf. Leclère 2008, 622) or between the latter branch and the Tanitic branch/Bahr Mues (Toussoun

¹⁰⁹ Daressy (1894) 214 conjectures that Ptolemy confused the northern city of Busiris with a homonymous village a few kilometres to the north-east of Heliopolis. Toussoun (1922) 50 adopts a similar line of reasoning but attempts to salvage his reconstruction of the Busiritic branch by opting for the village of Abou'l Sir, not far from Simbellawin and Thmuis/Mendes. It seems, however, highly unlikely that a river branch was named after either of these obscure settlements. Schwarz (1893) 273 speculates that Ptolemy placed the city of Sebennytyus in the southern part of the central Delta because it was the nome capital of the Upper (= southern) Sebennytyc nome. If Ptolemy was aware that Busiris was situated a few kilometres to the south of Sebennytyus, this mistake might have led him to place Busiris even closer to the Pelusiatic branch. Similarly, Ptolemy might have assigned 'Onuphis of the north' (*Onouphis katō*) a place in the northern Delta, situating it to the east of his Athribitic branch either because he knew it was not situated in the north-western Delta (with which he appears to have been relatively familiar) or simply because he had already filled his north-western Delta with other cities.

- 1922, 14-16, and the Barrington Atlas). According to one variant of the former theory the Tanitic branch took leave of the Pelusiatic river near Tell Beni Amir (NW of Bubastis; cf. Ps.-Skylax p. 107 Müller). On any view the area occupied by the Bubastite nome must have been much smaller than that shown on the map in Daressy (1931).
6. Busirite nome: between the modern Bahr Shibin and the ancient predecessor of the present-day Damietta branch; southern boundary north of Quesna (Rowland 2012).
 7. Diospolite nome: between Athribitic branch (Bahr Basandila) and Phatnitic branch (Baum 2008, 28; Blouin, map 4).
 8. Heliopolite nome: my estimate of c. 300 km² assumed (*contra* the Barrington Atlas) that the Pelusiatic branch flowed past Shibin al-Qanatir before continuing in a northerly direction past Senhewa (cf. Cooper 2014, 94 and his Figs. A2.9 and A2.13). Without this correction the nome would have occupied c. 400 km².
 9. Kabasite nome: between Agathodaimon and northern section of Thermuthiac branch. Southern boundary half-way between Sais and Kabasa? Northern boundary half-way between Kabasa and Buto?
 10. Leontopolite nome: between upper course of Phatnitic branch and Bahr Mues; boundary with Athribite nome a couple of kms. north of Athribis; boundary with Mendesian nome immediately south of Tell Thambol. See the map in Daressy (1931) 633, to be corrected on the basis of Fig. 4 in Butzer (1976), and Blouin (2014) map 4, for the northern boundary.
 11. Mareotis: between Lake Mareotis and desert. Some areas in the southern part of the nome, between the fertile belt lining the lake and the desert, are known to have been farmed, but most of this area seems to have been marginal. But see Kenawi (2014) 23, for the suggestion that the modern Al-Nubariyya canal might have had an ancient predecessor.
 12. Memphite nome: see Thompson (2012) Fig. 1.
 13. Mendesian nome: bounded by lower course of Phatnitic branch in the north-west and by central Daqahliya depression in the east. Southern boundary just south of Tell Thambol. See Blouin (2014) map 4. Blouin's estimate for the size of the Mendesian nome is 1,484 km² (Blouin 2014, 114), which I have rounded up to 1,500 km².
 14. Menelaite nome: between Agathodaimon and Lake Mareotis (Wilson 2012a, 100, Fig. 3). Lanna 2011, 185, Fig. 11, situates both Menelaos/Schedia and the Menelaite nome to the north of the Canopic branch, but this cannot be correct. Cf. Strabo 17.1.18, where the Menelaite nome is said to occupy the right bank of the Canopic branch (when sailing upstream; cf. *ibid.* 17.1.22). Based on planche 37 of Jacotin's *Atlas géographique*, an estimate of c. 250 km² seems reasonable, but Fig. 5.6 in Trampier (2014) shows a considerably larger area of c. 350 km², mainly because the lower course of his Canopic branch runs farther to the east.
 15. Metelite nome: bounded by Agathodaimon in the west and Taly in the east. Southern boundary roughly between modern cities of Damanhur and Disuq. See the map in Lanna (2011) 185. According to Cooper (2014) 72, Lake Idku was smaller in the Roman period than in the early nineteenth century,

but to judge from Wilson (2012a) 108, Fig. 6, the areas covered by water or marshes in the Roman period were similar in size to those shown on Planche 36 of Jacotin's *Atlas géographique*.

16. Nesyt: bounded by lower Phatnitic branch, by Lake Manzala, and by the Mendesian and Tanite nomes, possibly with a narrow strip of territory between Phatnitic branch and Lake Manzala (Blouin 2014, map 4). The nome might have occupied *c.* 600 km² if Lake Manzala had approximately the same extent during the second and third centuries AD as in the medieval period (Cooper 2014, 87), but accepting this high estimate entails positing a high proportion of marginal land (cf. Coutellier & Stanley 1987, 271, Fig. 7D). If the lake was as large as it had become by the early nineteenth century, the Nesyt nome would have occupied *c.* 400 km².
17. Onuphite nome: between Thermuthiac branch and Bahr Shibin (Dhennin 2012, 127, Fig. 2). Southern boundary half-way between Tanta and Mahallat Minuf; northern boundary half-way between Onuphis and Xoïs?
18. Pelusium: the size of the territory of Pelusium, which was technically not a nome capital, can be estimated as *c.* 300 km², but most of this land would have been marshy (cf. Strabo 17.1.21).
19. Pharbaetite nome: bounded by Bubastite branch, Bahr Mues, Pelusiatic branch and by Tanite nome. See Daressy (1931), map on p. 633 (where the nome appears larger), and Blouin (2014) map 4.
20. Phthemphuti: between Agathodaimon and Bahr Shibin. Northern boundary immediately north of Ibyar; southern boundary north of Sirsina? My estimate of *c.* 600 km² assumes that the northern and southern boundaries of the nome ran exactly from west to east. If the Phthemphuti nome also comprised the triangular area between the upper course of the modern Batanuniya canal and the Bahr Shibin, it would have been *c.* 150 km² larger, but the medieval sources do not refer to any canal linking the Tanuha and Ibyar branches.
21. Phthenotes/Phthenethu nome: bounded by Taly to the west (Geissen and Weber 2006a, 288) and Lake Burullus to the north. Eastern boundary half-way between Taly and old Sebennyitic branch, more or less along the course of the canal which flowed from Sakha to Lake Burullus in the early nineteenth century. This reconstruction would put the later nome capital of Phragonis (Kom Khawaled) within the Phthenethu nome. The Butic nome might have comprised more than 1,400 km² if it also included the area between the Taly and Lake Burullus and the dunes between Lake Burullus and the Mediterranean, but it seems more likely that in Roman times the coastal strip was administered as an extra-territorial *regio* (Jones 1964, 877).
22. Prosopite nome: between Agathodaimon and upper courses of Damietta branch and Bahr Shibin (Yoyotte 2001, 82; Dhennin 2012, 115-116). Northern boundary north of Sirsina (Dhennin 2012, 116) and Mélig/Milij.
23. Saite nome: between Agathodaimon and Thermuthiac branch; northern boundaries approximately along Damanhur-Disuq line and half-way between Sais and Kabasa? Southern boundary north of Ibyar.
24. Sebennyitic nome (Lower): bounded by Phthenethu nome to the west, Lake Burullus to the north and the marshes lining the lower course of the old Sebennyitic branch (Bahr Tira) to the east. My estimate of *c.* 1,200 km²

- excludes the coastal area between the Sebennyitic mouth and the Pineptimi mouth (c. 500 km²) which appears to have been administered as an extra-territorial *regio* (Jones 1964, 877; cf. Amélineau 1893, 351).
25. Sebennyitic nome (Upper): between the lower course of the old Sebennyitic branch (Bahr Tira) and the lower course of the Athribitic branch with perhaps some territory to the east of the latter branch (Blouin 2014, map 4). The coastal strip has been excluded from my estimate, but since this would have existed mostly of marginal land, including it would have had no discernible impact on my estimate for the amount of arable land.
 26. Sethroite nome: bounded by (old) Pelusiatic branch and desert; southern boundary just north of Phakousa (Geissen & Weber 2006c, 291).
 27. Tanite nome: between central Daqahliya depression and Pelusiatic branch; bounded by Pharbaethite nome to the south and by Lake Manzala to the north (Blouin 2014, map 4)
 28. Xoite nome: between Kabasite nome and Sebennyitic branch. Southern boundary half-way between Xoïs and Onuphis (Mahallat Minuf)? Northern boundary half-way between Xoïs and Pachnemunis?

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